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OLD ENGLISH IDYLS

BY

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“England was conquered to the music of verse,
and settled to the sound of the harp.”

STOPFORD BROOKE.

“No doubt, as they pushed the bows of their
long keels on to the shore of the Isle of Thanet,
they shouted short staves of verse with so great a
roaring that Gildas might well call them ‘whelps
from the lair of the barbarian lioness.’”

STOPFORD BROOKE.

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By JOHN LESSLIE HALL

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Dedication

"I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

"They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere."

LONGFELLOW.

PREFACE.

THE kind reception given my translation of *Beowulf* by both philological and literary journals, by philologists and *littérateurs*, has encouraged me to further work in the same field. This time, however, I have indulged my own imagination, with some help from myth and history; and I shall hope for a larger audience than before.

In the following pages I have tried to give a panoramic view of the Teutonic conquest of England and of the heroic period of Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, history. I have, as it were, assumed the rôle of an English gleeman of about A.D. 1000, and have sought to reproduce to some extent the spirit, the metre, and the leading characteristics of Old English verse.

As to details and technique, I have changed my mind somewhat since I published the translation of *Beowulf*. I have concluded that a reader who can enjoy alliteration on two lines out of three will willingly go farther. Indeed, friendly critics of the translation referred to have said that alliteration should have been used on

every line, as that work created a taste for alliteration without satisfying it sufficiently.

In another matter also I have somewhat altered my opinion — namely, in regard to the juxtaposition of two accented syllables ; and the Anglo-Saxon scholar will find in this work a goodly number of C and D types, along with the three (A, B, and E) used in my *Beowulf*.

In the preface to my *Beowulf* translation I referred to Browning as using cadences closely resembling those of Anglo-Saxon verse. I might have referred also to Longfellow's *Challenge of Thor* and *Nun of Nidaros*, and to Lowell's *Gudrida's Prophecy*, as showing that these two poets felt the power of old Germanic metres. In the same connection I would refer to Tennyson's remarkable translation of the *Battle of Brunanburh* and to *The Gleam*, one of his latest published poems.

While the poets of the last generation were feeling out towards these old metres, a great scholar of their day in his public lectures¹ was yearning for a return to the form and spirit of our ancient verse, and predicting that there would some day be a renaissance of that form and spirit.

Very recently Mr. William Watson and Mr. W. E. Henley, two of the younger poets of England, have made use of rhymeless measures closely resembling

¹ George P. Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, Lecture XXIII.

those of Anglo-Saxon poetry. These are possibly due to the study of the Anglo-Saxon poetry itself, or they may be experiments made under the influence of some of the poets named above. However that may be, I am convinced that many of our poets and a large number of their readers have a "feeling" for the ancient forms of English verse; and I believe that the friends of my *Beowulf* work and some others will be willing to follow me while I put into verse-forms approximating the Anglo-Saxon types some of the myths, legends, and poetical situations of the Anglo-Saxon era.

Mr. Henley's poem to Margaret E. Henley and Mr. Watson's *England My Mother* I would cite in connection with the reference made to them in a foregoing paragraph.

J. L. HALL.

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OLD ENGLISH IDYLS.



I.

THE CALLING OF HENGIST AND HORSA.

Lo ! in legend and lay long we have heard of
 The fame of our fathers, folk-leaders mighty,
 Eminent earlmen. Oft, gleemen-thanes
 All through the ages, excellent song-smiths,
 Have sung of the bold and brave and illustrious
 Fathers of England from far o'er the waters,
 Earls of the eastward, how, oft in their sea-boats,
 They sailed from their happy homes on the mainland
 Far o'er the flood-deeps, famed, mighty ones,
 Westward to Albion, wishing, craving
 More honor and glory than ever had come to
 Earls of that era. *I* have ne'er heard of
 Men so mighty of muscle and valor,
 Earls so eminent, as the atheling-brothers,
 Hengist and Horsa, heroes of Anglia,
 Lords of the mainland. The lay of the gleeman
 Is full of their fame. Far 'mid the races,
 The minstrel's song, swelling to heavenward,
 Tells of the splendid, spacious, audacious

Deeds of those daring, doughty, invincible
Fathers of freedom who fared o'er the waters
Hither to England, and here builded them
A kingdom so mighty that men cannot shake it,
And hell cannot take it. These high-hearted, eminent
Earls of the mainland, eager for glory,
Were feasting, carousing in their far-away, sea-washed
Home in the billows : blithe were the sea-kings,
Beer was abundant. Their beakers lifted they,
Lustily shouting : the sheen-bright, delicious
Drink of good heroes they drained merrily
From cups that were brimming, from bumpers adorned
By the art of the graver. 'Mid all of the races,
Kindreds and folks, few had not heard of
Wihtgils's sons, Woden's great-grandsons,
Hengist and Horsa, heroes distinguished,
Land-chiefs beloved. Lavish of treasures,
They feasted and shouted far over the waters,
East over the ocean, where Anglians and Jutemen
And men of the Saxons, mighty, dauntless,
Royalest of races, were reared 'mid the billows,
Founders of freedom. There flowed in abundance
The dear-lovèd mead, mellow, delicious
Cheer-drink of heroes : high was the glee,
The bright cups clattered. Clear to the welkin
Sang then the singer the sweet, heart-cheering,
Most winsome of melodies men ever listened to,
Heroes under heaven. I have heard never
'Neath arch of the ether of earls gladsomer,
Of men merrier with music and laughter

And song of the gleeman. Sang he exultingly,
In hall and in bower, to hero and maiden,
Of the daring deeds done by their fathers,
Of mighty marvels of muscle and valor
Wrought by their forefathers, far-famous heroes and
Athelings of old. Earls, hero-thanes
Harked to the harper. The high-mooded troopers
Lifted their lances and lustily bellowed,
Clattered and clanged them, clashing and crashing
Their shields and their shafts, shouting, yelling,
So great was their glee ; good were their folk-lords,
Their liegelords belovèd were lavish of jewels ;
Beer was abundant, and beakers were foaming
And bumpers were brimming ; the benches did rattle,
Loud was the laughter. — Then the lady Rowena,
Wavy-haired, winsome, well-lovèd daughter
Of Hengist the atheling, entered the mead-hall ;
With jewels unnumbered, the gem-brilliant maiden
Glittered and glimmered and glinted resplendently,
Star-like did sparkle, as stately, decorous
She came through the building. The brothers were
seated,
Hero by hero, high on the dais,
Famed folk-leaders. Fondly Hengist, then,
Greeted his daughter : down by her father
She sat on the settle, sweet, elf-lovely,
Curly-locked lady. The lay of the gleeman, then,
Sounded sonorous, swelled like a chorus,
Rising to skyward ; the scop's clear strains,
The harp's sweet harmony, heavenward mounted,

Merry their mood : of men under heaven
There is none wise enough to know or to dream
What Wyrd the weaver willeth to bring him
Of good or of ill : to each happeneth
Of weal or of woe what Wyrd appointeth him :
She is supreme. — There passed, then, a liegeman
Where Hengist and Horsa, high-mooded kinsmen,
Bold, battle-fierce, their beakers were tasting,
Spake with decorum, came with his message then,
Door-warden doughty : “ Dear-lovèd leaders,
There are come to our coast, craving to see ye,
Eager and anxious earlmen from Albion’s
Far-away shores, have fared o’er the water-ways,
Came o’er the currents, craving to see the
Belovèd lords of the lands of the Saxons,
Whose fame, they say, hath afar and awide been
Borne on the breezes that blow to that far-land
West o’er the waters. They wish and do beg ye
That ye famous folk-leaders will fain grant them
A hearing to have now.” Hengist replied, then,
Offspring of Woden : “ Etheldrith dear,
Excellent earlman, hast thou asked these wanderers
What led them to leave their land and their kindred
Far o’er the ocean, and out on the waters
Boldly to battle the blustering currents,
Sailing the seas ? ” Said then Etheldrith,
Door-warden doughty : “ I doubt not the sleepless,
Watchful and dauntless ward of the sea-coast
Questioned them coming, as his custom is ever
To stand on the strand striding his charger,

Curly-maned courser." Quoth then Hengist,
Wihtgils's son: "Safely then lead them,
Excellent Etheldrith, in to the building
While bumpers are brimming; bid them to enter the
Hall of good heroes." High on the dais, then,
Sat the two brothers; blithe were the earlmen,
Doughty and daring: of death, horrible
Robber and reaver, recked then but little
The far-famed, unflinching, fearless, invincible
Earlmen of Anglia. All was yet joyous,
Happy was Horsa: for him was not done then
The weaving of woe that Wyrd, the mighty one,
Winds as she will for world-folk and races,
Children of men. — Mindful of courtesy,
Etheldrith came in to the wine-hall,
Bringing the messengers, men of the waters,
Earls of the ocean. The excellent liegemen
And kinsmen of Hengist and Horsa were feasting;
Singing their songs, sat they carousing,
Gladsome, gleeful. Gaily shouted they,
Sorrow they knew not. The sons of the athelings,
Brave-hearted battle-thanes, were blithely quaffing the
Luscious and mellow mead that was flowing
In beaker embossed and bumper ycarven
By art of the craftsman. All their equipments,
Armor and arms, did the earlmen of Albion
Early do off, entered the building,
The wide-famed wassail-hall; with welcome were greeted
By many an Anglian as ale-cups were passing.—
Ludwell discoursed, a lord of the Britons,

Earlman of Albion : “ Ye earth-famous brothers,
Hengist and Horsa, heroes of Saxony,
Fair-haired, far-renowned folk-leaders mighty,
Hearken our message. Hither the currents,
The billows of ocean brought us uninjured,
Bold in our barks, braving the waters,
The seething surges, sent, sped upon
Errand most urgent, asking the mighty and
Far-famous, fearless, fierce-mooded, dauntless
Hengist and Horsa to help us to conquer the
Direful, devilish demons and monsters
That, night and day, never relenting,
Dog and pursue us, devils from hell,
Fiercest of foemen.” Furious-mooded
Hengist, then, answered : “ Hear when I tell ye
That Wyrd all-wise willingly helpeth
The undaunted earl if doughty his spirit !
Go ye then back ; bear to your people
This message from Hengist, men of the westward,
That death is dearer to the dauntless hero
Than infamous life is.” Ludwell replied,
Prince of the Britons : “ Bravest of warriors,
High-mooded Hengist, hearken, we beg thee.
We are kinsmen and vassals of Vortigern mighty,
King of the Kentmen. We came at his bidding
To pray that your troopers, with ye two as leaders,
The brave-hearted, battle-true barons of Saxony,
Will lend us their aid, our land and dear ones
To defend from the furious, fiery, implacable
Fiends of the north. Foemen oppress us,

Cruelly harry us, killing and slaying us :
Men of the Picts painted and horrible,
Those grim, grisly and ghastly destroyers,
From the north swooping are sacking and burning
Our hedges and homesteads, heedless of pity,
Fell, fierce-mooded. And from far o'er the waters
Men of the Scots, mighty and cruel,
Grind us to powder ; greedy of plunder,
They rob and ravage, ruthless and savage
Demons and devils. Dear hero-knights,
Wide-famous war-leaders, will ye not hearken
Our mournful entreaties ? Our true-hearted liegelord,
The wielder of Kentmen, well will requite ye,
Vortigern the king will care for and grant you
Gifts as gracious as good he bestoweth
Free from his hand." Hengist the chieftain
Laughed then loudly, land-prince distinguished,
Said then smilingly : " Meseemeth 't were better
That your king grapple and gird on his weapons,
His armor and arms, his excellent falchion,
And lead out his loyal liegemen and vassals
To fight for their homes, than hide in his palace
In shameless deeds, shaking with terror,
Meek 'mid his maidens : many have told us
He slinks like a sluggard. But say, good Ludwell,
What aileth Albion's earlmen and princes
To weep, wailing like women and children,
And flee from the foemen ? Your fathers of old
Were brave as the bear. With bosoms undaunted
They looked for the legions that long had been winning

Wars o'er the waters, waded to sea-ward
Meeting the foeman. Much have your people
Failed of their fame. Folk-leaders worthy,
Hasten ye homeward hence in your vessel,
Safe in your sea-boat, say to your liegelord
That heroes of Anglia heeded your message and
Will send you assistance. The seas angrily
Foam in their fury; far is the journey,
Dire the danger: if we dare to adventure
Crossing the currents, our keels imperilling,
Far from fatherland, facing the billows
That roar and tumble and toss and rumble,
Where the wind northeast, icicle-laden
Fiercely doth whistle, — if we face the great tempests
Bringing you aid, offer ye nothing
Our kindness requiting? Will the king of the Kentmen
Gladly give to us gold in abundance,
Shepherd of peoples, will shower upon us
Gems and jewels, your generous-mooded
Liegelord beloved?" Ludwell rejoined,
Earlman of Albion: "Eastward of Kent,
Off in the ocean is the island of Thanet,
The loveliest of lands that are lapped by the billows,
Winsomest of isles of all engirdled
In the wash of the waves, water-encircled,
Fairest of places. This fain, gratefully,
We'll grant you to hold as home-land and country
Forever and ever, excellent-mooded
Lords of the Saxons; and lavish of treasures
We'll fee your dear troopers, if ye fare hitherward

And help us to hurl these horrible, cruel
Demons and devils to their dens in the northland
And west o'er the waters." "Well have ye spoken,"
Hengist exclaimed; "we will come early now,
Braves of the Britons, and bring you assistance,
Soon o'er the sea-deeps. You may say, strangers,
That Hengist and Horsa, the high-mooded, dauntless
Kings of the creeks, will climb on their vessels with
Many a daring, doughty, unflinching
Sea-dog and viking, and seek for the beautiful,
Wide-famous, winsome, well-lovèd, down-trodden
Island of Albion. Not any of foemen
Ever hath daunted us. On all the waters
We have stretched under heaven our standards and
banners.

The ocean is ours; the isles of the sea
Bow to our bidding and bring us their treasure
Of grain and of gold. Gleeful, fearless,
We ride on the rivers, racing and chasing
The fleets of the foe. Fare ye then homeward,
Back to dear Albion; bid them to turn their
Eyes to the eastward." Off then they hastened
Forth on the flood-ways, far to the westward,
Hying them home. The harp's sweet music
They heard on the air. The earls of the Anglians,
Their cups draining, drank as they hearkened:
Sweet was the song; sang then the harper
Gladly his gleesongs, gave forth his music
Proudly, exultantly. His praise lavished he,
Singing the story of the exceeding glory

Of earlmen of old, athelings, mighty ones,
Sons of the gods, scions of Woden ;
Urged the brave earlmen ever to mind them
From whence sprang they ; sped them on their journey,
Urged them to Albion, isle of the sea-foam,
Land all lovely with leaves, blossoms,
Forests and flowers, fairest and winsomest
Island that ocean ever embraceth,
Bountiful, beauteous ; bade them possess it.

II.

THE LANDING OF HENGIST AND HORSA.

EARLY thereafter, earlmen of Anglia,
With Hengist and Horsa, heroes distinguished and
Leaders belovèd, leaped in their fast-chasing,
Stout-builted, sturdy steeds of the water-ways,
On the seas clomb then, to seek for the far-away,
Wide-famed, sea-girt, water-encircled
Island of Albion, most excellent land
The sun ever smiled on. — In song and in legend
Of the folk of the east, 't was often recited
(The heroes had heard it), how hardy, brave-mooded
Men of the mainland once mounted the ocean,
The storm-troubled sea, that stretched to the westward,
And sailed o'er the currents, till they came to a land of
Fruits and of flowers and foliage so green
As never was seen, whither Saxon rovers
Thronged in thousands, thinking to capture
That land so lovely. — Light-hearted, glad were
The henchmen of Hengist ; high their glee was,
Merry their mood : men do not know what
Wyrd awaiteth them. Wassail and song
Rose to the welkin. There rode, then, at anchor
Close by the cliff-edge, keels for the journey,
Three of them lovely : lay they well fastened there

Safe by the sea-shore, with sails fluttering
Broad on the breezes that blew o'er the ocean,
The realm of the oar. The excellent vessels were
Eager and anxious to be off on adventure,
Longingly looked tow'rd the lands of the west,
Thirsted for glory. Thanemen of Hengist
From afar and anear knew of the journey,
To the coast came then ; craving for glory,
Begged he would grant them to go on the far-famed,
Daring and venturesome voyage, to bear their
Aid unto Albion : earls of that day were all
Eager for honor. Off by the shore, then,
The birds of the billows blithely awaited the
Heroes' behest ; in harbor all ready were
The keels at the coast. There clomb to the prow, then,
High-mooded, happy henchmen and kinsmen
Of Hengist and Horsa. Hundreds of earlmen
To the shore thronged, then, each thinking that, haply,
'T was he that would have the high and distinguished
Honor and glory of going that daring and
Venturesome voyage. The vessels lay ready,
Foam-throated floaters. Fair-haired, eagle-eyed
Heroes of Anglia were happy and glee-hearted,
Lifting their lances, laughing, shouting,
Wished for the wind to waft them to Albion's
Beautiful shores. Bountiful treasures,
Richest of ring-mails, rings and jewels and
Collars and corselet with carving embellished
By armorers' art — all quickly were
Laid on the vessel, loveliest of gifts for the

King of the Kentmen. The customs they knew
Of earls of that era. Not ever was told me
Of gifts that were greater : good were the heroes ! —
They sailed seaward then ; saw in the distance
The fairest of fatherlands, fond-lovèd country,
Home of good heroes. — High on his courser,
The guard of the strand stood on his watch and
Gazed out to seaward, saw his dear comrades
Sail out on the ocean, off on the fathomless
Home of the whale : his heart wavered then
'Twixt sorrow and joy. He rejoiced in glory and
Augured them fame ; but he feared that his dear ones
Were leaving belovèd land-folk and kindred
Forever behind them, on endless adventure,
To meet them no more. Yet, mindful of honor,
Loudly he shouted : “ Lords of the Anglians,
Hengist and Horsa ; hail, ye distinguished
Earls of the ocean. To all and some of you
My greeting I give, gladly saluting you,
Wishing you well. Wend on your journey,
The gods watch over you. Odin and Frea
Keep you and care for you coming and going,
Where'er on the ocean ye earlmen may venture.
May Njörd graciously grant you his aid o'er
The throng of the waters. Thor the Hammerer
And Baldur the Beautiful bless you and keep you
Fighting for fame. Farewell, ye heroes :
Hasten ye hitherward home to your fatherland,
Laden with lustre.” Then, lightly and sprightly,
The foamy-necked barks fanned by the breezes,

Likest to birds bosomed the waters,
Coursing the currents, keels of the dauntless,
Famous, fearless, far-sailing heroes,
Encircled with speed. The sea-boats glided,
Barks of the vikings, bounded the mere-ways,
The fields of the flood. Fain, glad-mooded,
Hengist the high-hearted hero and leader,
Stood by the steersman that sturdily guided the
Rein-deer of breezes as she ran through the water-streets
Over to Albion. The Anglian leader, then,
Eagerly asked as to all of the beauteous,
Delightful lands that lay in his vision
Afar and anear, northward, southward,
Eastward and westward; anxiously waited he
And hoped for his haven, as hied the good vessel,
The deer of the surf, southward, westward,
To Albion, the fair and ever-belovèd
Land of great heroes. — High on his seat, then,
The steersman espied a storm to the northward;
Ocean was angry; the oarsmen fearless,
Sons of the sea. Soon were the vessels
Embraced by the billows, the birds of the ocean
Clutched by the currents. The cordage creaked,
The chains rattled, chattered and clattered,
The good ships groaned, grievously moaned.
Blustering blasts blew from the northward,
Eager and icy: *I* have heard never
That so fierce and frightful and frantic a storm e'er
So rushed in its rage and raved o'er the sea-deeps
Icicle-laden. — The earlmen were merry,

And, shaking their shields, shouted so loud that
The terrible roar of the tempest was more
Than drowned in the sound. — The sea-ways were
troubled,
Rocking and roaring ; no rest had the vessels ;
The tackling crackled, as timbers and beams were
Mashing and crashing. The men of the Anglians
Wished but weened not the well-lovèd ships could
Bear them to Albion. Then brightened the heavens,
The sun from the southward soon in the welkin
Lavished his luminous lustre and splendor
O'er land-folk and races, lovely, brilliant
Candle of heaven. O'er the cup of the waves, then,
The swans of the sea swam on the billows,
Southward and westward, till soon in the distance the
Earls of the Anglians not aught could behold of
The land where their loved ones long o'er the waters,
Yearning to meet them, waited to greet them ;
No more saw then the sweetest of countries
That ocean doth ever ardently woo to his
Blustering embraces. The battle-brave earls
Saw in the distance southward and eastward,
Far o'er the sea, Saxon and Angle-land,
Cradle of heroes, and the cloud-capped shores
Where the free Frisians, famed 'mid the races,
Have with locks unshorn lived through the ages,
Bending their necks to none under heaven,
Kingliest of kins. They came on their journey
Where Eider and Elbe and Ems and Weser,
Dear-lovèd waters, wind to the ocean,

And beauteous Rhine, river of heroes,
Flashing and splashing foams to the northward
Seeking the sea. Then sailing westward, they
Early anon drew nigh to the beautiful,
Longed-for, lovely land they had dreamed of
On their way o'er the waters, winsome, peerless
Isle of the ocean, ever-belovèd
Land of the leal. Live forever, thou
Beauteous Albion, bride of the waters,
Fairest of fatherlands ! Fondly, lovingly,
Sing we thy praises, precious and world-honored
Land of our fathers. — The foam-covered vessels
Came to the coast, the keels speedily
Borne by the breezes, birds of the water-ways
Flying afar. Folk of the island, then,
Gladly greeted them, giving them welcome as
Friends that the Father had found them and brought them
To fight with the foeman. Few of them wist, then,
How Wyrð the weaver wove at her spindle
Of good or of ill for all men and races
That dwell on the earth, as ever she must do,
Goddess supreme. — Proudly equipped
The men of the ocean were eager to step then
Off the dear barks that had brought them to Albion's
Shores they had longed for. Their lances did shimmer,
Their bills and burnies brightly did glimmer
And glisten resplendent ; sparkling, flashing,
Jewels were bright in the battle-true, sturdy
Brands of the heroes. The barks of the troopers,
Well-lovèd vessels, went shoreward then,

Grinding the gravel. Glad were the sea-boats
To lie by the land they long had been seeking for
O'er ocean's angry eddies and currents
That had dashed them and lashed them. Then the
daring, intrepid

Earls of the Angles eagerly hastened to
Leap to the land, longed to possess the
Loveliest of isles that ocean claspeth
In his big embraces, most beauteous of places
In the wash of the waters. — Well they remembered
The rings, jewels and richest of burnies,
Collars, corselets, with carving embellished,
They had laid on the ship as likest to please the
King of the Kentmen. With care lifted they
The bountiful treasure. — So the troopers all ready
Stood on the strand: the strangers were eager to
March on their mission. Men of the island,
Folk of the Kentmen, came then to meet them
And gladly did greet them, gratefully hailing the
Fond-lovèd heroes that feared not to bring them
Aid o'er the ocean, early did hie then
To bind the dear barks that brought them to Albion,
Where Wantsum's waters, washing and swashing
Shingled the shore. The ships quickly were
Bound with their ropes and rocked on the billows;
The beautiful-bosomed birds of the ocean
Quietly lay in the long-sought, well-earned
Nests they had flown to. Fain, Anglians
Would look for the king; called for the gleeman to
Sweep o'er his strings and sing them the glories

Of their fathers before them, folk-leaders mighty,
And lays of the land they had left far behind them when
Hither they hastened. The harp resounded
With music and melody. Mightily shouted
The exultant, triumphant earls of the ocean,
Sons of the sea; they sang with the gleeman of
The doughty and daring deeds wrought by their
Fathers of old, earth-famed, distinguished
Founders of freedom and folk-builders mightiest
Known of the nations. Anon, the joyous
Shaft and the shield shared in the merriment,
Clanging and clanking and clashing and crashing,
Well-lovèd weapons. War-thanes, liegemen
Of Hengist and Horsa hied them to Vortigern,
Lord of the land, liegelord of Albion;
The troopers did tramp, treading measuredly,
Sought for the king: the sweetest of melodies
Wound to the welkin, winsomest of music
'Neath the hand of the harper. — High on the dais then,
The lord of the Kentmen saluted the brave-hearted
Heroes and vikings: "Hail! ye distinguished
Men of the mainland, mighty, eminent
Folk-leaders famed. Foemen implacable
Are cruelly harrying, killing and slaying us;
Men of the Picts painted, horrible,
Grisly and grim, ghastly destroyers,
Swoop from the northward sacking and burning our
Hedges and homesteads, heedless of pity and
Fierce-mooded, fell; and, from far o'er the waters,
Men of the Scots, mighty and scatheful and

Cruel and venomous, are coming in hordes
To grind us to powder. Great-hearted heroes,
If ye came o'er the ocean to aid us in driving
And beating these demons back to their dens in the
North and the west, I know it will happen
That forever and ever earthmen shall honor you
And gleeman and minstrel remember your deeds in their
Legend and story." Strided then Hengist
Up to the dais ; angrily, hurriedly
Cried to the king : " We came o'er the ocean,
Asking not honor : the island of Thanet
Is the loveliest of lands that lie in the billows and
Are washed by the waters, well-lovèd island,
Dearest of places. Promise us this
To have and to hold as a homestead forever
For us and our heirs, if we aid you in driving these
Demons and devils to their dens in the northland and
West o'er the waters." " Well hast thou spoken,
Hengist the Saxon ; so shall be it then,
High-mooded heroes." The hall resounded
With gladness and glee ; gifts were abundant and
Beer was not bitter ; bowls overflowing were
Lifted aloft ; and the lord of the Kentmen
In the brimming bumper buried the sorrow that
The wrath of the hero-chief wrought in his soul-deeps.

III.

THE LADY ROWENA.

FEW were the months ere foes numberless
As the seashore's sands savagely harassed
The king of the Kentmen. The cruel, blood-thirsty
Men of the Picts minded but little, then,
Foes from the northland, how the fair-haired, dauntless
Earlmen of Anglia ever intrepidly
Hewed them with edges, aiding the Kentmen,
But hied southwardly, ceased not their ravenous
Sacking and hacking. Soon was it told to the
Woe-begone king, the womanish, white-livered
Liegelord of Albion, that his earlmen and vassals,
Scorning him bitterly, would bring them a king
From the southward and westward, a war-mooded leader
Who dauntless and doughty would drive him away
From kingdom and country. He called terror-struck
(His heart was so heavy) for Hengist, far-famous
Earl of the Angles, urged him to help them
As erst he had done, eagerly promised
To give and to grant him gifts abundantly,
All he might ask of him. East o'er the waters,
O'er the surging, seething, sea-currents foaming,
Sent, then, Hengist for Saxons and Angles
And Jutemen and Frisians, folk of the mainland,

Most venturous-mooded of vikings and pirates
That sailed o'er the sea-deeps : soon, messengers
Reached the brave races. Readily, eagerly,
Heard the good heroes that Hengist had bidden them
Come o'er the waters ; and there came then rejoicing
Earls of the east eager for glory
And thirsting for fame. Far o'er the waters,
O'er the waves westward, winds from the northward
Fanned then their foam-throated, far-dashing vessels
O'er the curve of the currents : the cliffs and headlands
Of beautiful Albion beckoned them onward
Far o'er the flood-deeps. Fond-loving comrades
Of the good days of old, eager to meet them,
Hied then to greet them : hearth-companions,
Kinsmen and brethren, came then joyfully,
Blithely embraced them, and bade them to tell of
The land and loved ones left o'er the waters
Far to the northward ; of friends, kindred
And own dear fatherland fondly inquired they,
Asked then eagerly, earlman of earlman,
One of the other. — Early anon,
They bound to the shore the barks of the athelings
Eighteen beautiful birds of the water
Close by the coast, cabled them tightly,
Fastened them firmly, lest the flood of the tide
Should sweep out to seaward the swans of the ocean,
Or the shattering shoals should shiver and crush the
Barks that had brought their brethren and comrades
Safe o'er the sea-deeps. — Sweetest to Hengist
Of all that had come o'er the cup of the billows,

O'er the mingling of waters, westward and southward,
Was the lady Rowena, the lovely, beautiful,
Gem-brilliant maiden, jewel and darling
Of Hengist the hero: the harp and the gleeman
Have sung for ages the elf-bright folk-maiden's
Beauty and loveliness. Broad her renown is ;
Forever and ever England shall honor her
As first of her fair-haired, fond-lovèd myriads
Of beautiful maidens, mothers and daughters
And sisters of heroes: the sweet-toned harp,
Joy-wood belovèd, long shall continue
To sing her glory in saga and story,
Lovely, illustrious lady Rowena,
Leading the line of belovèd, winsome
Women of England, elf-brightest, purest
Of mothers and maidens that men ever sought for
Or earls ever fought for; then ever-belovèd
Hilda the holy, handmaid of Heaven,
Eminent virgin; Ethelfleda
Lady of Mercia, mighty, fearless,
Queenly, kingly, conquering heroine,
Sister and daughter and darling of heroes
And known of all England; the excellent folk-lady,
Godiva the gracious, glory-encircled
And honored forever, who, to aid her dear liegemen,
With body all bare (but her bountiful hair
As a robe fell around her) rode through the borough,
While her leal, true-hearted troopers and thanemen
Hid in their houses with hearts that were thankful,
Shunning to shame her; the sheen-bright twain

Edith entitled, each famous in
Legend and lay of lands numberless,
High-hearted, sweet-mooded, song-famous maidens,
Honored of England. Not e'er hath been told me
Of any more goodly and gracious in spirit,
More eminent folk-queen, than Edith the gold-adorned
Peace-weaver pure, who passed the wild-dashing
Ocean-ways angry to Otto the mighty's
Spacious dominions, splendid and far-famed,
Where, gleaming with jewels, the gem-brilliant maiden,
Sweetest of virgins, sister of Athelstan,
Was Otto the atheling's honored, distinguished,
Dear-lovèd wife, till death departed them,
Till she laid down her life-joys. Then the Lord's dear
 virgin,

Edith the pure, angel-white, holy
Handmaid of Heaven, whose heart in her childhood
Turned from the tawdry trifles and honors
Of rank and of riches, resting, abiding
In God and His glory ; gladly forsaking
The wealth and the worship of a well-lovèd daughter
Of an earthly king, to earn the proud title
Of a child of God, great, almighty
Ruler of heaven. — Hengist discoursed, then ;
The crafty, cunning, clever war-hero,
Earl of the Anglians, opened his word-treasure,
Spake to the king then : “ Come now, I beg thee,
Lord of the Kentmen ; look with thine eyes on the
Beauteous buildings and brave liegemen-thanes
Of Hengist and Horsa. High heavenward

We have builded a beauteous beer-hall and palace,
Of halls handsomest heroes e'er revel in,
Splendid, spacious, sparkling with rarest
Jewels and gems, joy-hall of heroes ;
Come thou and see it." Soon, then, Vortigern,
Folk-lord of Albion, fared with the hero
O'er the waters of Wantsum to the wassailing-building,
Mead-hall resplendent : men of that era
Not ever had seen, nor even had heard of
Hall-building grander. Glad was Hengist,
The artful and eager earl of the mainland
Was merry in mood, then ; he minded to win him
No little of land from the lecherous, treacherous
King of the Kentmen. The clever, eagle-eyed
Earlmen of Thanet, thanemen of Hengist,
Watched the two folk-lords ; well might they reckon
That Hengist and Horsa and heroes that gladly
Served them as liegemen not long would content them
With land on the island out in the waters,
But early would ask for acres unnumbered
And Kent as a kingdom. Came, then, the twain,
Hengist and Vortigern, the hall-building seeking,
Joy of the Jutemen. Jewel-bedighted,
Gold-adorned, gleaming, the glorious building,
Hall of good heroes, high in the ether rose
Spacious and splendid, sparkling, glimmering
Wide o'er the water-ways. Well 't was builded,
Fastened most firmly. Folk of that era
Not e'er had beheld, not ever had heard of
Building so beautiful, beer-hall and palace

So high under heaven. Hugely 't was fashioned ;
Sturdy and stout it stood in the borough
Delightsome to liegemen ; late and early the
Thanemen of Thanet thither did hie them
For gifts and for glee. Glad, bright-hearted,
Feasted the earlmen : ale-vessels clattered,
Beer was abundant ; blithe were the heroes,
Sorrow they knew not. — Ne'er had Vortigern
In all of Albion, in east or in west,
In north or in south, seen or heard tell of
Mead-hall so mighty. The muscle and skill
And brawn of great builders had bravely, stoutly
Fashioned and finished it, fairest, strongest of
Halls under heaven. Hengist and Vortigern
Entered then in ; up on the dais
Side by side, then, sat the two folk-lords,
Land-rulers friendly. Faithful they yet were
Each to the other : what after should happen
Only Wyrd the wise wist in her counsels ;
She told it to none. Troopers of Hengist,
Dearest of hearth-friends, hastened to benchward :
Lief and loyal liegemen and vassals
Of the far-famed, eminent folk-lord of Thanet
Bent to the benches ; beakers clanged, then,
Platters clattered, crackled and rattled,
The hall resounded ; heroes a-laughing
Drained, then, their beakers. Boastingly, Hengist,
Lord of the island, opened his word-hoard,
Spake after custom : “ Kinsmen, liegemen,
Thanemen of Thanet, thanks offer I

Odin and Thor for all they have granted
Me and the heroes that hither followed me
O'er the waves westward. Well I remember
The days of my youth : no youngster on earth was
More daring and doughty. Down from the north
O'er the seas sailed I southward, westward,
Greedy of glory ; greatly I thirsted
For fame 'mid the races. My father gave me then
Homeralāf, handsome, splendid old
Ring-sword radiant, richest of weapons,
Hugest and heaviest of hand-works of giants
Of ages of yore. I easily brandished it,
Fame-deeds performing, fought as a hero in
Many a far-land. Men of the southland
Often did seek to seize, grapple my
Far-famous weapon : I fiercely resisted them,
And dealt them their death-blows. I dared as a strip-
ling on
Countless adventures. Vortigern, the Kentman,
Heard of my fame in his far-away island
Off in the ocean : the excellent folk-lord
Was glad when he saw me sail to his land
To fight with his foemen. I have fought with the dreaded,
Hated and horrible hordes that are pouring in
Down from the north, the numberless, slumberless,
Pitiless Picts, painted demon-like,
And the merciless Scots : we merrily scattered them
Back to their caverns. I carved, slivered them
With Homeralāf : he helped me cheerfully,
Brave-hearted battle-sword." The boasting of Hengist

Pleased the good earlmen ; exultingly laughed they,
Their shields shaking, shouted sonorously ;
They loved the good leader who had led them to battle
O'er land and o'er sea, and said to each other
That neither south nor north, in the circuit of waters,
Was there better or braver battle-folk leader
Than Hengist, earth-famous ocean-king, land-chief,
Ruler of races. I rarely have heard of
Gifts goodlier given by liegelord
To excellent earlmen 'neath arch of the heavens
Than Hengist the good one gave to his earls in the
Banqueting-building. The bountiful liegelord,
Mighty men-ruler, commanded his thanes, then,
Jewels to fetch there, gems in abundance,
The red-gold ring, the radiant, glittering
Collar and bracelet ; and for battle-equipments
The burnished and beautiful byrnie and helmet
And chased-handle chain-sword, choicest of weapons.
Fain and freely, the folk-lord of Thanet
Lavished his gifts on liegemen and kinsmen
With abundance of bounty : the brave-hearted earl was
Beloved of his thanemen. The lord of the Kentmen
Was meetly remembered, as men of that day were
Mindful of etiquette. The island-chief bade them,
Brave battle-leader, bear to king Vortigern
The gold-twisted torque he had torn from the neck of a
Prince of the Picts that he pierced in the battle
And slivered in slices. Soon, the bright-gleaming,
Radiant, wreathèd, rich-carvèd jewel
His neck encircled : serpents of gold

Clasped the bright collar. — Then the queenly Rowena
Entered the building : the elf-lovely maiden
Glittered and glimmered with gold-work resplendent
And rings the richest, and her robe sparkled with
Gems and jewels. Joyously, hero-thanes
Marked the dear maiden, as, mindful of etiquette,
On to the dais the daughter of Hengist
Stately proceeded, stood near her father,
Dearest of daughters. The decorous-mooded,
Beautiful virgin bore in her hand, then,
The choicest of chalices, chased, embellished
With gravings of gold, goodly and precious
Heirloom of ages, all over engraven with
Writings of rune, radiant, sheen-bright
Ale-cup of old. The excellent maiden,
Most lovely of ladies, her lip-treasure opened,
Spake with decorum : “Quaff this beaker,
Leader belovèd, liegelord, chieftain
Of battle-thanes brave. Be thou forever
Honored of earthmen while ocean surroundeth
The blustering bluffs.” The beaker he took, then,
Far-famous hero, held to his lips
And lustily drank of the luscious and mellow,
Honey-sweet liquor ; handed the bumper, then,
Back to the maiden, the mead-cup of heroes
Again to the gold-adorned, gracious, belovèd
Lady Rowena. Went she, anon,
Where the excellent-mooded earlmen of Hengist,
Kinsmen-comrades, were quaffing joyously
Bumpers and beakers, bare the bright cup to

All the dear earlmen elder and younger,
Greater and lesser, graciously tendered it
To one and to all : they each tasted, then,
Drank of the mead-cup. The dear-lovèd lady,
Fair maid of Anglia, early proceeded,
Stately advanced, where Vortigern ogling her
Sat on the dais, said to the folk-king,
“Wes hæ̅l, O King!” handed the cup to
The liegelord of Albion : answered the Kentman,
“Drinc hæ̅l, drinc hæ̅l,” and heartily drank of
The luscious, delicious, liquor of heroes
That frothy and flaky foamed in the silvery,
Beautiful beaker. The bowl quaffed he,
And kissed the most comely, queenly of maidens,
The lovely, illustrious lady Rowena,
Would fain possess the fair-haired, sweet-mouthed,
Dear-lovèd damsel, daughter of Hengist,
Not long to delay (he little remembered
The wife he was wedded to), wished not to tarry,
Longed for the lady, lecherous, treacherous
Beast-king of Kentmen. Crafty, artful,
Hengist of Anglia, eagle-eyed folk-leader,
Laughed in his spirit : he sped well in the
Snare he had set for the simple, lecherous
Lord of the Kentmen. He looked at the king, then,
Beer-fuddled, simpering, saw how he ogled the
Sweetest of maidens. Said, then, Hengist
Wihtgils’s son (war-heroes hearkened,
Liegemen-thanes listened) : “Lord of the Kentmen,
Good king Vortigern, the kissing of maidens

Is a crime in the lands that lie o'er the waters,
Off to the east of you. Earls of the mainland
Might mulct thee heavily, save haply the honor
Of kissing a king should count as atoning
For lapse in the law. The lady Rowena
Shall early be off to her own dear fatherland,
Far o'er the flood-deeps, where folk-law shieldeth her
From high and from low." Loud, vehemently,
The king of the Kentmen cried, then, to Hengist
(Eager his love was): "Earl of the Saxons,
Give me the gracious, goodly, beautiful
Rowena to wife; and I well will requite thee,
Liegelord of Thanet. There are left me a-many
Other good islands off in the waters
For excellent earlmen." Answered, then, Hengist,
Artful, crafty one: "Nay, *I* will not barter
My heart's dear jewel for hundreds of islands
Off in the waters. My word hath been given
A prince of the Frisians, a folk-lord eminent,
Who hath wished her to wife as a weaver-of-peace
'Twixt Frisians and Anglians. My honor is plighted,
I swore on my sword." So spake Hengist, then,
Most artful of athelings: eager, vehement
Vortigern cried then: "Kent is the fairest
Of lands under heaven. Let the dear maiden,
Gracious, winsome, gladden and cheer me
As my beauteous bride, and I blithely will grant thee
This kingdom and country to keep and govern
Forever and ever: aid me in holding
What yet shall remain to me." Yelled, then, Hengist

(The guest-building groaned) : " Good is the promise,
Take care that thou keep it. Kent, then, is mine, now,
To have and to hold. Haste with the maiden
West over Wantsum : my word hath been given,
Freya hath heard me. I will help thee to conquer
Thy fell-mooded foemen." Forth, quickly then
Vortigern led the virgin belovèd,
The peerless, precious princess Rowena,
Delayed not nor lingered : his love was so eager
He cared not for kingdoms. The carles of the Anglians
Reveled in riot, carousing, shouting,
Bellowed like oxen while bucklers and lances
Were banging and clanging. A brave battle-thane
Who sat at the feet of the folk-lord of Thanet
Held in his hand a horn brimming with
Earl-cheering ale, urged the dear heroes
To hearken and hear him : " Health to the mighty
Odin and Thor and all the good gods that
Help the brave hero ; and health, wealth to the
Great-grandson of Odin, eminent, far-famous
Hengist of Kentland." Cups, bumpers were
Drained to the drop. They drank lustily,
Shouting gustily : good was the mead, then,
Heroes were happy. The harp's sweet music,
Clear song of the singer, swelled to the welkin,
Joy-wood of heroes. A henchman-minstrel,
Gleeman of Hengist, heartily sounded his
Liegelord's praises, as lightly he struck the
Sweetest of melodies. The mead-building echoed
With mirth and with music, the merry, melodious

Lay of the gleeman. Gladly liegemen
Heard of their folk-lord's far-famous, mighty
Deeds of renown ; how his name was dreaded
In all earth-regions, where ocean with billows
Washes the shingly shores and the edges
Of lands without number. The lord of the Anglians,
Hengist the hero, his harp-strings touched, then,
Glee-wood of heroes ; gay-mooded sang
In measure and melody. The merry, glad-hearted
Liegemen of Hengist lifted their voices
In tumultuous chime, marking the rime
With clanging and clanking and clatter of lances,
Brave-hearted thanemen. Blithely sang he,
The giver of rings gustily chanted,
Offspring of Odin, eminent folk-leader :
“ Hail, ye good heroes, henchmen, kinsmen,
Liegemen belovèd ! The land of the Kentmen
Is eager to greet you : go and possess it
Forever and ever. To Odin and Thor
And all the good gods that guided us hitherward,
The thanks of us all ever be rendered,
Gods of the northland ; but glory forever
To Homeralāf, belovèd, faithful
Heirloom of ages : *I* will e'er give him
Thanks and praises, for he proved in the battle
Most mighty of helpers. Hear when I tell you
That 't was my dear sword that safely hath brought us
Through thick and through thin : thank him forever,
Best of all battle-swords.” The banquet was over,
Feasting was finished : folk-earls of Thanet

Hastened then homeward, the hall-building left,
Excellent ale-hall. They early were ready
To cross o'er the current, where Kent in the westward,
Of lands liefest, longed for good heroes
To earn and possess her and ever to bless her.

IV.

THE DEATH OF HORSA.

SIX-WINTERS' time had the sweet, wavy-haired,
Curly-locked queen of Kent-land and Albion
Delighted her lord, lived with decorum
As wife of his bosom. War-mooded men, then,
Hot-hearted Kentmen, harassed the spirit
Of Rowena the winsome, well-lovèd, far-famed
Queen of the Kentmen ; cruelly vexed her,
Said she had marred the metal and valor
Of the king of the Kentishmen ; counselling Vortigern,
Urged that the excellent earls of the mainland,
Hengist and Horsa and henchmen unnumbered,
Be driven away to their wild, desolate
Dens o'er the ocean. Earls of the Kentmen,
Thanemen of Albion, angrily said
That the men of the Saxons minded to seize the
Whole of Albion, to own and to hold it
Forever and ever. Oft, liegemen-thanes,
Vassals of Vortigern, with vehemence cried :
"The Scots and the Picts, scathers and foemen
Loathsome, horrible, are less to be dreaded
Than the artful, eager, ever-encroaching
Sons of the Saxons, the savage, grasping
Henchmen of Hengist, who hither came over

As friends and defenders, but foully have proved them
Treacherous traitors." They taunted the king,
Said that he loved the lady Rowena's
Outlandish kin, caring but little
For folk of his own. Early anon, then,
They chose as the king of Kent-land and Albion
The atheling Vortimer, Vortigern's son,
Wolf of the Kentmen. Wild, fierce-mooded,
Hot-hearted, cruel, the homes of the Anglians
He ruthlessly ravaged, rashing and lashing
The liegemen of Hengist, harried them fiercely,
Hacking, hewing them, hotly pursuing them,
Proudest of princes : at the play of the edges,
The meeting of spears, he spared few of them,
Doughtiest, mightiest man of that kindred,
Folk-leader fearless. Four great battles
He fought with the foreigners ; would fain drive them
from

Albion's isle and east o'er the flood-deeps,
Back to the lands they had left on the mainland,
O'er the home of the whale. Horsa was doomed, then,
Though brave in the battle, brother of Hengist ;
He had lived the life-days' limit that Wyrð,
Spinster of fate, had spun for that hero,
Must bow in the battle. Bloody the field was,
Of fights fiercest : the flower of warriors
Fighting fell foremost. On the field of Aylesford,
Was bitterly fought the fiercest of hand-fights
The earlmen of Vortimer ever did wage with
Athelings of Anglia : then exulted the raven ;

That battle-grim bird was blither on that day
Than ever before. The eagle was gladder,
The wolf merrier than for many a summer :
On the slain seized they, supping, lapping
The blood of the brave, biting, mouthing
The flesh of the fallen. The field of Aylesford
Reeked with the blood of the best of the heroes,
A river of red ; ruthless, woful
And sudden the slaughter of sons of athelings,
Bitter the battle. Braver heroes,
Worthier war-smiths, ne'er went under helmet
The foeman to face. Far-famed Hengist
And Horsa his brother were hot for the battle,
Woden's great-grandsons were greedy of slaughter,
Mighty, raging, were racing and chasing
Earlmen of Albion ; eager for conflict,
The excellent athelings would unaided, single
On the field find then a folk-lord of Albion,
Would gash him and slash him, slit him in slivers,
And call to the raven to come to the revel
With the wolf of the forest. Fierce-mooded Horsa,
Wihtgils's son, soon grappled with
The brave Catigern, brother of Vortimer,
Prince of the Kentmen. Proudly Horsa, then,
Sought for the struggle, said defiantly
Lifting his linden-shield : " I am liegeman-kinsman
Of Hengist the hero ; Horsa my name is,
As well thou wottest. Would I might spare thee
The swipe of my sword as I swing it in battle :
For Rowena's dear sake I 'd willingly grant thee

Thy life-joys longer." Loudly Catigern,
His shield shaking, shouted to Horsa :
" I ask thee no odds ; on to the battle,
Horsa the Saxon. The sons of Vortigern
Have sworn by their sword-blades to sleep not, slumber
not,
Till the tricky, treacherous troopers of Hengist
Are out on the ocean and off to their far-away
Cliffs and caverns. Come now and let me
Hurl thee to hellward." Horsa stepped forward,
The angry, earnest earl of the Anglians
Brooked no delay : bitter, implacable,
Frantic his mood was. Forward he stepped, then,
Hot 'neath his helmet. High o'er his visor
The boar-image glistened ; the good, trusty
Beast of the battle bravely guarded the
Head of the hero. His harness did sparkle,
His bright-shining battle-sark brilliantly glittered and
Shone with its sheen. From its sheath forth, then,
Flashed Felalāf, faithful, dauntless
Brand of the hero, hankered for battle,
Was eager to bite through the bone of the hateful
Foeman of Horsa, freely would drink of
The blood of the Welshman. Brightly glimmered he,
Old, iron-made heirloom and jewel
Of Wihtgils's son, sword of the ancients,
Handwork of giants. The hot-mooded, fire-breathing
Horsa and Catigern clashed in the battle,
Lashing and slashing with sword-blades that rattled ;
Fierce was their fury. Fire, then, glimmered,

Sword-sparks bright brilliantly shimmered ;
Felalāf's eye flashed in his wrath, then,
Brave-hearted battle-sword. Bitterly fought the two
High-hearted heroes ; I have heard never of
Earls angrier, eagerer to grapple
Each other in battle, uncle and stepson
Of lady Rowena : woe was her spirit,
Laughed she but little, when she learned eftsoones
Of that dreadful, direful, death-dealing struggle
'Twixt Saxon and Celt ; herseemed that her heart would
Burst in her bosom. Bold-mooded Catigern
Was stout striking then, stood in the combat
More firmly far than his father had ever
Told him or taught him, turned not away
To flee from the foeman, foined with his war-blade
Eagerly, angrily. The excellent Horsa
Asked for no odds ; his edges mighty were,
Keen were his cuts. Catigern had perished,
Liegeman of Vortimer, alone in that struggle,
Had not Wyrd the wise willed and determined
That both of the brave ones should bow in the battle,
Fall on the field : folk-troops and races
Bend to her bidding. The bold giants, then,
Together did grapple ; gory the field was,
Red like a river. Rapidly whirled they
Blows on each other in onset of battle till
The brand of each earlman bit through his foeman's
Armor of iron and in to his bone-house
Dived down deeply, drank of his life-stream,
Blood-thirsty battle-blade. Both the good heroes

Fell to the earth, then ; not either could longer
Live in his life-joys, must lie prone there
Shorn of his war-strength, sharing no more
The hall-glee of heroes, hearing no longer
The song of the singer as he sang, chanted
Of earlmen of old : off on their journey
Went the two warriors. Woful of mood,
Sad, heart-weary, was Hengist the atheling,
When he learned that his brother was biting the dust and
Lifeless was lying low on the battle-field,
Parted from earth-joys. The prince of the Anglians
Was woful of spirit, wide-famous leader :
He bent o'er his brother's bloody, lifeless
Soul-house forsaken, said mournfully
In rhythmical measures, lamenting and praising :
“ Dead is Horsa, my dear-lovèd brother,
Eminent atheling. Not e'er under heaven
Was hero more hardy. The hand is now lifeless
That erstwhile did aid me in all my adventures
Afar and anear. There was never faithfuler,
Loyaler liegeman, liefest of comrades,
True-hearted counsellor, trusty adviser,
Shoulder-companion. We played in our boyhood
As fond-loving brothers in the far-away, sea-girdled
Land of our fathers. Alas ! no more
Shall the hero behold it. Let henchmen lovingly
Lift the brave earl up from his slaughter-bed :
Let the bier be brought, and bear him from henceward
Off to his burning ; let brave ones attend him
Hence to Valhalla. Hither summon ye

Hārfeax the gleeman to rehearse the all-glorious
Deeds of the dead." 'T was done as he bade them ;
And early thereafter the excellent minstrel,
The singer of Hengist, sought his dear liegelord,
Saw him then sadly sobbing, groaning,
Mourning and moaning, lamentingly bewailing
The fall of his famous, fond-lovèd brother,
Hengist for Horsa. His heart bitterly
Ached as he looked at the belovèd, faithful
Hero and leader, as he lay so helpless,
Lying so lifeless, loosened from earth-joys,
Reft of his war-strength : I wot he had rarely
So slept like a sluggard. Sad-hearted, mournful
Was the thaneman-harper ; he thought tenderly
Of far-away fatherland, how a fair, beautiful
Boy in the borough was brave, yet gentle,
Meek and yet manly. Mourned he for Horsa,
Well-lovèd warrior. The woe-mooded scōp,
Hārfeax, the heart-weary harper and minstrel,
Wakened the chords, calling forth music
Sad yet triumphant, would sing the story
Of Horsa and his glory. The good old minstrel
Touched then his strings with tremulous, quivering
Fingers that faltered, fondly lamenting :
“ Low lies Horsa, belovèd, dauntless
Offspring of Wihtgils, my excellent, well-lovèd
Liegelord of yore. I yet can remember
Those long-gone days in the land of my fathers
And home of great heroes. Happy, joyous
Were Wihtgils's earlmen ; the ale-building mighty

Was thronged with thanemen ; thousands of jewels
Glistened and glittered. Good was the liegelord,
Niggardly never. It is known of all races
How bairns of his body were born in his manor,
Hengist and Horsa, handsome, belovèd,
Beautiful boys. Blessèd be Odin
That *I* was ever an honored and welcome
Guest in that gift-hall ! Goodly, noble,
The beautiful bairns burst into manhood
Soon on my sight ; I saw them before me,
A pair of great princes. I am pained, woe-stricken
That one of them lieth lifeless, unwarlike,
Down in the dust, dead in his armor,
Shorn of his hand-strength. A handsome, fair-haired,
Beautiful boy was the brave young Horsa,
Stately of stature, straight as an ash-spear,
Manly of mien, yet meek in his spirit,
Tender and true. He turned unto warfare
Early in youth ; his excellent father
Let his brave earlmen take him off on the seas
To the northward and southward. None was hardier,
More dauntless, intrepid. The two great brothers
Filled with their fame the fjörds and the rivers
And oceans and seas ; and all of the northland
Rang with their deeds, and the deeps did resound
With the praise of their prowess. Prone in the dust now
The dear one is lying : dead is Horsa,
Our fond-lovèd friend-lord : Fate hath offsnatched him,
Wyrd is supreme. I ween, friends will soon
Build him a barrow broad, uptowering,

High under heaven, as heroes and leaders
Are wont to enjoy. Well merits he
That forever and ever honor be paid him
'Mid all the races that ocean encircleth
As he kisseth the cliffs : come, hero-thanes,
Lift the dear liegelord." The lay then was ended,
Sad yet triumphant song of the gleeman,
Mood-weary minstrel. Men of the Anglians
Brought, then, the bier, bare the dear hero,
Atheling of earlmen, off from the field
Where low he was lying. They looked on him tenderly
(Sad were their spirits); he saw not the good ones,
Gave them no answer to all they were saying
Of him so kindly. They quickly lifted him,
And laid him away where the wolf and the raven
And the dewy-winged eagle not ever might touch him,
Where birds of the battlè and beasts of the carnage
Might never annoy him, noble, distinguished
Earlman, atheling. The excellent hero
Must climb on the pyre to the clutch of the fire,
Must hence to Valhalla. Henchmen-kinsmen
Of the battle-famed brothers would burn the good hero,
Give to the flame the famed, eminent
Kinsman of Hengist ; high on his pyre
Would aloft lift then their liegelord-chieftain,
The man so lamented. Many good earlmen
Fetched for the fire fagots and twigs
And logs of the largest, laid them together
High 'neath the welkin : the wood-heap was early
Built for the burning. There were brought thitherward,

On the heap hung then, helmets, byrnies,
Arms and armor and all such war-gear
As their lord when alive delighted to gaze on,
Or bear to the battle. Beautiful gems,
Of rings richest and rarest of treasures,
Were flung on the fire : the flame devoured them,
Ate them greedily, gulping, swallowing them,
Hungriest of heroes. Henchmen-kinsmen
Of Wihtgils's bairn brought his good charger,
The horse of the hero : the high-bred steed
Was led to the pyre and laid thereon then
To burn with the brave one. Bright were his trappings,
Gleaming, golden ; the gear of the war-horse
Was shining, sheen, would shame not his rider when
In the halls of Valhalla the hero all-mounted
Passed to his place in the palace of Odin.
Two well-lovèd kinsmen, Wiglaf and Guthmond,
Mindful of duty, mounted the fire
To go with the atheling off on his journey
To Valhalla on high : the horse he would ride on
(The kinsmen were comrades) when he came in his glory
To the heaven of heroes. Heart-weary thanes,
Wailing, disconsolate kinsmen and vassals
Of Hengist and Horsa, hymning their sorrows,
In mournful measures lamented their leader,
In rhythm and rime : " Red is the fire,
Bitter the bite of the blaze as it burneth,
And the flame as it fluttereth. Fare thee well, Horsa,
Leader of liegemen, belovèd, lamented
Earl of the Anglians. Honor attend thee

In Valhalla, the heaven of heroes and warriors
And all good athelings. Thy earlmen will ever
Remember thy mighty muscle and valor
And deeds of great daring. Dear-lovèd Horsa,
Ride thou in splendor the spacious, lofty
Halls of Valhalla. Here, soon will we
Build thee a barrow, a broad-fashioned, high-towering
Memory-mound, that men of all eras
Ever may honor the excellent name
And far-reaching fame of the faithful, dauntless
Liegelord and leader, belovèd, trusty
Brother of Hengist." The burning was over,
The flame flickered, flaring but little,
All in ashes the atheling Horsa
And battle-steed brave ; burnt, molten, then,
Were treasures and gems. The troopers of Hengist
Delayed not long, liegemen bereavèd,
A-building the barrow ; battle-thanes reared it
High under heaven on hill-top alofty
Nigh unto Aylesford. With earth and with rock
They sadly, proudly piled it heavenward,
Mournful, exultant, till upward there rose a
Memorial mound-hill, to mark and to honor
The passing of Horsa, prince of the vikings,
Who had laid down his life for liegemen and kinsmen.
They with flint faced it, that, firm on the summit,
It stout and strong might stand on the hill-top
For ever and aye. The excellent heroes
Wished then but little the waters of heaven,
Whether rippling in rain or rushing in rivers,

Should wash away ever the well-lovèd atheling's
Broad-stretching barrow : they built it so firmly,
With stones stayed it, to stand there forever
As a memory-mark to the man who had gladly
Laid down his life that his liegemen-kinsmen
Might have and might hold the homesteads and land-
rights

The gods had given them. Goodly, lofty
The barrow uprose, ready to hold the
Atheling's dear ashes ; up tow'rds the welkin
The hill-mound of heroes a-high towered then,
That farers from far-lands might fail not to know it
As Horsa the hero's high-rising, spacious
Memory-mound. A many of jewels
Bright and beautiful, bracelets, collars,
Brooches and rings, richest of treasures,
Were brought to the barrow. The bright-shining helm,
Armor of iron and all good weapons,
Swords and lances, that liegemen and heroes
Love in their life-days were laid in the mound-hill
With atheling Horsa's ashes and bones,
His troopers twain, and the trusty, faithful
Horse of the hero. Valhalla received them
Early thereafter : they entered proudly
The spacious and splendid expanses that span the
Halls of Valhalla. Then the heart-wretched troopers,
Mourning shield-bearers, mounted their steeds
And rode round the broad-stretching barrow of Horsa
Sadly, slowly ; singing his praises
Mournfully in measure ; remembering with pleasure

His deeds of daring, his dauntless, fearless,
Adventuresome valor ; vowing and declaring
That, through all the ages, forever and ever,
Their children's children should cherish and honor
His name and fame, never forgetting
How Horsa with Hengist hither had led them
To the isle of Albion, ever-belovèd,
Peerless and precious pearl of the ocean ;
How, to win for his folk this fairest of islands,
This sea-encircled, sweetest of places,
He sought and fought the fiercest and bravest
Of all men of Albion, and eagerly hastened
To lay down his life for land-folk and kindred.

V.

CERDIC AND ARTHUR.

HENGIST went off to All-Father's keeping,
Wihtgils's son, to the Wielder's protection,
Earl of the Anglians. From the east came, then,
Cerdic the Saxon a seven-year thereafter ;
The excellent atheling, offspring of Woden
Came into Albion. His own dear land
Lay off to the eastward out o'er the sea-ways,
Far o'er the flood-deeps. His fair-haired, eagle-eyed
Liegeman and son sailed westwardly,
O'er the flint-gray floods, with his father and liegelord,
O'er the dashing, lashing, dark-flowing currents
That roll and roar, rumble, grumble
Eastward of Albion. Not e'er hath been told me
Of sea-goers twain trustier, doughtier
Than Cerdic and Cynric, who sailed o'er the waters
Valiant, invincible vikings and sea-dogs
Seeking adventure. Swift westwardly,
O'er the fallow floods, fared they to Albion,
Would look for the land that liegemen-kinsmen
Of Hengist and Horsa and high-mooded Aella
And Cissa had come to. Cerdic was mighty,
Earl of the Saxons. His excellent barks,
His five good floats, fanned by the breezes.

Gliding the waters were wafted to Albion,
Ocean-encircled isle of the sea-waves,
Delightsopest of lands. Lay then at anchor
The five good keels close to the sea-shore ;
The swans of the sea sat on the water
Close by the cliff-edge. The clever folk-leader
Was boastful and blithesome, brave-mooded Saxon,
Said to his earlmen : “ Excellent thanes
True-hearted, trusty table-companions,
See the good land the loving, generous
Gods have given you : go, seize on it.
I and my son have sailed westwardly,
To gain with our swords such goodly possessions
As Hengist and Aella did erstwhile win
On the island of Albion. On to the battle,
The foe confronteth us.” Folk of the island,
Earlmen of Albion, angry-mooded, then,
Stood stoutly there, striving to hurl them
Off in the ocean east to the mainland,
Back o’er the billows. Bravely Albion’s
Fearless defenders fought with the stranger
Then and thereafter : early did Cerdic
See and declare that slowly, bloodily,
And foot by foot, must the folk of the Saxons
Tear from the Welsh their well-lovèd, blithesome,
Beautiful fatherland. Brave were the men that
So long could repel the puissant, fearless
Sons of the Saxons that had sailed o’er the oceans
To do or to die, doughty, invincible
Earls of the east. The excellent kinsmen,

Father and son, scions of Woden,
Burned in their spirit to build in the south the
Greatest of kingdoms : 't was granted to Cerdic
To be first of the famous folk-lords of Wessex,
Land-chiefs belovèd ; to lead, herald the
World-famous roll of the wise, eminent
Athelings of Wessex, where Egbert and Ethelwulf,
Alfred and Edward, ever resplendently,
Spaciously shine, shepherds of peoples,
Excellent athelings, and Athelstan, Godwin
And Harold the hero, helms of the Saxons,
Have their names written in record of glory
In legend and story, leaving their fame as an
Honor forever to England, peerless
Mother of heroes. — The men of the east
Slowly, bloodily builded a kingdom
Where Aesc and Aella not e'er had been able
To bear their banners, though both these athelings
Were in might marvellous, mood-brave, heroic
Leaders of liegemen. — Beloved of the Welsh
Was the atheling Arthur, excellent, valiant
Lord of the Silurians, land-prince, warrior
Famed 'mid the races. He rued bitterly
That father and son, Saxon invaders,
To the left and the right were wresting, tearing
From races no few their fond-lovèd, blood-bought
Homesteads and manors, were hacking and sacking
Folk of the southland, and far westwardly
Had bitterly banished the best of the heroes
And earlmen of Albion. Arthur was mighty,

Uther Pendragon's offspring belovèd,
His fame far-reaching. Afar and anear then,
All men of Albion honored and loved him ;
Sent over Severn beseeching the mighty
Silurian leader no longer to tarry
In crushing the foemen, but quickly to drive them
Back to their bottomless bogs in the eastward
O'er the rime-cold sea ; said wailingly :
" The fierce, pitiless folk of the eastward,
Mighty, remorseless men of the waters,
Treacherous, terrible, will take speedily
Our name and nation, and naught will be left us
But to dare and to die." The doughty, invincible
Atheling Arthur, earl of Siluria,
Offspring of Uther, early was ready ;
Feared not, failed not, fared on his journey
Seeking for Cerdic. Sèvern's waters
Saw him and laughed, little expecting
That Arthur the king and the excellent knights
Of the Table Round, with troopers a-many,
Would suffer the foemen to seize and possess the
Lands of Siluria, would let the remorseless,
Implacable, pitiless pagan and heathen
Sail over Severn ; not soon did it happen
While Arthur the atheling his earth-joys tasted
Here under heaven. That hero was brave,
Great, all-glorious : God fought for him :
Nor Cerdic nor Cynric could soon injure that
Hero of Heaven ; his horrible destiny
Wyrd the weaver wove in her eerie,

Mysterious meshes, mighty, taciturn
Goddess of gods : she gives whom she will to
Speed in the battle. Brave-mooded Arthur,
Offspring of Uther, was eager for glory,
Peerless of prowess : proudly, dauntlessly
Fought he for Albion. Not e'er heard I
Of better battle-knight, more bold, fearless,
That sun ever shone on : the sheen of his glory
With lustre illumined the land where his mother
Gave birth to the bairn ; and broad, mighty,
Spacious his fame was ; his splendid achievements
Were known to all nations. None could e'er dare to
Cope with that hero, till the conquering, dauntless
Earl of the Anglians, ever-belovèd
Founder of freedom and father of kings,
O'er the seas sailing, slowly, bloodily
Builded the best and broadest of kingdoms
Heroes e'er heard of. The heart of king Arthur
Was sad as he saw the Saxon invader
How, foot by foot, forward, onward,
He ever proceeded, eastward, westward,
Far to the north, founding and building
A kingdom and country to crush and destroy the
Land that he long had lived for, thought for,
Fiercely had fought for. Famed was Arthur,
Wide his renown ; but Wyrd the spinster
Taketh no heed of hero or craven ;
Her warp and her woof she weaveth and spinneth
Unmindful of men. The mighty war-hero,
Atheling Arthur, set out on his journey,

Laid down his life-joys ; the belovèd folk-lord's
Feasting was finished. Unflinching, fearless,
Doomed unto death, dead on the battle-field
Fell the brave folk-prince. Foul was the traitor,
Hated of heroes. The hope of his countrymen
Sank into darkness ; for dead was Arthur,
The last and the best and bravest of Albion's
Athelings of eld. Not ever thereafter
Could the Welshman withstand the sturdy, mighty
Tread of the Saxon as tramping, advancing,
Onward he went, eastward, westward,
Far to the northward : none withstood him,
Now Arthur was lifeless ; he alone was able
To stay for a moment that sturdy, mighty,
Invincible march. — The valiant, doughty
Kinsmen of Cerdic, conquering earlmen,
Forward then bare bravely, unfalt'ringly,
Daringly, dauntlessly, the dragon of Wessex
Fuming and flaming ; fearlessly bare it
Northward, eastward, on to the westward,
O'er Severn and Thames and Trent and Humber
And east oceanward, till all the great races
Of Albion's isle owned as their liegelords
The children of Cerdic, sire of kings and
Founder of freedom. Few among athelings
Were greater than he, gift-lord eminent,
Wielder of Wessex ; the wise-mooded, far-seeing,
Brave-hearted folk-prince builded his kingdom
As a bulwark of freedom. His brave, high-hearted
Table-companions, trusty, faithful

Liegemen and thanes, leaped to his service
In peace and in war : well did they love him,
Bowed to his bidding ; blithely followed him
Where the fight was fiercest ; would fall in the battle
Gladly, eagerly, excellent heroes,
Ere they 'd leave their dear lord alone on the battle-field,
Bearing unaided the onset of foes and
The brunt of the battle. The brave ones were mindful
Of the duties of liegemen ; dastardly thought it
To flee from the field while their fond, loving
Leader and liegelord lingered thereon
Dead or alive ; deemed him a nidering
Who stood not stoutly, sturdily, manfully
Close to his lord as he led in the battle,
Facing the foemen. The free-hearted earlmen
Minded the days when their dear-honored liegelord
Feasted the throngs of thanemen-kinsmen
In the handsomest of halls heroes e'er sat in
'Neath dome of the welkin. Well they remembered
How their lord lovingly lavished his treasures
On all earlmen older and younger,
Greater and lesser : 't were loathsome treason
To leave such a lord alone in the battle,
With a foe facing him. The folk-ruler mighty
King-like requited them with costliest gems,
Most bountiful banqueting. The brave-hearted man
Builded his kingdom, broadly founded it
Northward, eastward, on to the westward,
South to the seaward. He said tenderly,
Cerdic discoursed, king of the Saxons,

Father of England : “ Old, hoary is
Cerdic your king, kinsmen-thanemen,
Warriors of Wessex. Well have ye served me,
Ye and your fathers. I yet remember
How, ere age came on me, I ever was foremost
In deeds of daring, in doughty achievements,
In feats of prowess. I fought valiantly
Alone, unaided, with only my faithful,
Well-lovèd sword, and swept away hundreds
Of earlmen of Albion : now age, ruthless,
Horrible foe of heroes and warriors,
Hath marred my might, though my mood is as daring,
My spirit as stout and sturdy as ever
In years of my youth. I yearn in my soul, now,
To cross over Severn and cut into slivers
The wolf-hearted Welshmen. Well-nigh a forty
Years in their circuits have seen me a-conquering
Here under heaven : from hence, early
I go on my way. Woden will bid me
To the halls of Valhalla, where heroes will meet me,
Gladly will seat me 'mid the glory-encircled
Heroes of heaven. In my heart it pains me
To feel my war-strength fading and waning
And ebbing away. Would I might leap now
Like a king to the battle, not cow-like breathe out my
Soul in the straw. The son of my bosom,
Cynric my bairn, bravely will lead you
When I am no more : he ever hath proved him
A bold battle-earl. My blade I will give him,
Sigbrand my sword : he hath served me faithfully

Sixty of winters : well do I love him,
Bold-hearted battle-brand." The brave earlmen, then,
Shouted lustily, loudly commending
The words of good Cerdic. Cynric they loved, too,
Son of the hero ; themselves had beheld him
How valiant, adventurous, invincible, king-like
He ever had borne him, since erst he landed
To fight, with his father, the fierce, implacable,
Wolf-hearted Welshmen : well did they love him,
And oft on the ale-benches earlmen asserted
That, when good king Cerdic, gracious, belovèd
Ward of the kingdom, went on his journey,
Laid down his life-joys, his liegefolk would never
Find them a folk-lord fonder, truer,
More honored of all men, than atheling Cynric
Surely would prove him. Shouted they lustily,
" Wes hæ̅l, wes hæ̅l ! hero of Wessex,
Cerdic the conqueror," clanging their lances
And beating their bucklers, bellowed like oxen,
Blew in their shields, shouting, yelling
Glad-hearted, gleefully. The good one discoursed, then,
Cerdic the king said to his liegemen
(Henchmen all hearkened) : " Hear ye, good troopers,
Of Sigbrand my sword. I said he was trusty,
And bitter in biting. I brought him to Albion
Far from the eastward. I fared, long ago,
East over Elbe and Oder and Weser
And thence to the northward, never wearying,
Greedy for glory ; 'mid the Goths found it,
Old, iron-made, excellent sword-blade,

Weland his work. Well I remember
How I heard high-hearted heroes and athelings,
My true-hearted troopers, tell how a dragon,
His cave guarding, kept there a treasure
Age after age ; how earls of the eastward
Said that Sigbrand, the sword-blade of Hermann,
Was kept in that cave covered with magic,
Encircled with sorcery, secretly guarded,
Bound with enchantments. I boldly adventured
A grim grapple with that grisly, terrible
Fire-spewing dragon, to fetch to the westward
The well-lovèd, warlike, wide-famous brand
Of Hermann the hero. I hied o'er the rivers
And off to the eastward : earls of those lands there
Laughed when they learned that a lad from the west-
ward
Would dare the great dragon that had daunted their
fathers
Five hundred winters. I fared eastward then,
Met with the monster, mightily smote him,
To earth felled him ; flamings of battle
Horribly hurled he, hotly he snorted,
Would seethe me in poison. With the point of my
blade
I proudly did prick him. Prone he fell forward,
Dead lay the dragon. His den was no more
A horror to heroes ; hastened I in, then,
To joy in the sight of jewels and treasures
And song-famous swords that had slept on the wall
there

From earliest eras, edge-keen, famous,
Magic-encircled swords of the ancients,
Old-work of giants. With joy, saw I
World-famous Sigbrand, sword-blade of Hermann,
Men-leader mighty, matchless battle-knight,
Hero of Germany. I hastily seized it
All rusting to ruin ; the rime-carved, ancient
Sword of the hero was soon hanging then
Safe at my side : it hath served me faithfully
Sixty of winters, well-tried, trusty
Friend-in-the-battle. When I fare, troopers,
Hence to Valhalla, high-hearted Cynric,
My fond-lovèd son, folk-lord of Wessex,
Will take up the brand borne by his father
And carve out a kingdom clean to the northward and
Wide to the westward ; the Welshman will cower
And shudder and shake, as the shout of the Saxon
Frightens afresh forest and river
And meadow and plain. I shall pass on my journey
Early anon : old and hoary,
Death will subdue me. Dear young heroes,
Do as I bid ye. Bear ye onward
The banner of Wessex. Wyrd will help you
If doughty your valor. I dare to allege it,
That the gods have given this goodly, bountiful
Land of Albion to the liegemen and children
Of Cerdic the Saxon ; seize, hold to it
Forever and ever. Ye early will see me
Lorn of my life-joys, lying unwarlike,
Dead in my armor. I urge you, good heroes,

To build me a barrow broad-stretching, lofty,
High on the cliff-edge, that comers from far
May see it and say that so did Angle-folk
Honor the atheling that erstwhile led their
Fathers of old in founding a kingdom."

VI.

AUGUSTINE.

Lo! we have heard of the holy, belovèd,
Bishop and Father, far-famous Gregory,
Good, great-hearted, God's dear servant,
Faithful and far-seeing father and pastor,
Shepherd of souls, how he saw in the market
Beautiful, blue-eyed bairns of the Angles
Selling as slaves. Then sad, groaned he
When he learned that the land they lived in was given
Wholly to heathendom, that Heaven's good story,
The gospel of peace, gracious, joyful
Message of mercy to men of all races,
Was known of not any of all the myriads
Of fair-haired Anglians in that far-away, sea-girt
Isle of the ocean. Eagerly Gregory
Yearned tow'rds the youths: "Yea," said the good one,
God's dear liegeman, "go I will early
To the isle of the Anglians and urge them to hearken
The good, peace-bringing gospel of Jesus,
Saviour of sinners: the souls of the Angles
Shall shine in my crown when I come into glory
At the throne of the Lamb, who liveth forever,
Lord everlasting." Thus the loving, gentle
Bishop and father felt unto all men

Here under heaven, his heart mellowed
With love that was heavenly ; he longed for his Master's
Kingdom to come 'mid the kindreds and races
He had died to redeem ; by day and by night,
Prayed he in faith, with fasting and vigil,
That, at Jesus' name, every knee might bow
In heaven and earth and under the earth,
And every tongue confess that He truly is Lord,
To the glory of God. The good one minded,
The Lord's dear liegeman, longed for the journey
To the far-away land of the lovely, godless
Youths of the Anglians ; he yearned greatly
To bear the blessed, beautiful story
Of Jesus' love to the land of the Angles,
Heathenish heroes, where the high and the low,
The king and the churl, called upon Odin
And Thor and Frea and throngs of beings
That peopled the air, nor ever heard tell of
The fond-loving Father that formed them and gave them
The breath of life, of the loving Jesus
Who left his celestial, delightsome, perennial
Home in the heavens, and hither did come
To bear among men the mocking and taunting,
The gibes and the jests, of Jews that spitefully
Scorned and scouted and scoffed him, and nailed him
Tight to His death, tender, patient
Saviour of sinners. Sad were the Romans
When they heard that their gentle, holy apostle
Would fare to the northward ; they feared they might
see him

Never again going his errands
Of mercy and peace to men of that city
That had long loved him. They little would hear of
His mission o'er sea, mightily urged him
To leave unto others the errand to Anglia
While himself should serve his city and nation,
Rome and Italy, ever-belovèd
Land of his fathers. Loth was Gregory,
The Lord's dear liegeman, loving apostle,
To entrust his mission of mercy and pardon
To any one else of all the brave fathers
That would go gladly so goodly a journey
Off to the Anglians. Early thereafter,
He sent in his stead the saintly Augustine,
Heaven's dear hermit, who hied to the northward
With two-score trusty, true-hearted, God-fearing,
Faithful confessors: they fared gladly, then,
Northward, westward, never repining
Though rivers were dashing, fiercely lashing
Their shingly shores, though shimmering glaciers
From Alps that were icy angrily thundered
And rumbled around them. Rome's dear missionaries
Recked not of rivers though rolling in blood-waves,
Cared not for mountains though covered with ice-robcs,
Fearing no peril pressed on their holy,
Blessèd, joy-bringing journey to Albion,
To tell the Anglians the ever-enrapturing,
Heart-stirring story of the holy, divine
And gentle Jesus who, rejected and slain
By the men He had come to, commanded His liegemen

To go forth bearing His gospel to all men,
Kindreds and nations. Noble Augustine
Wished for the wind that would waft him to seaward,
Northward, westward, o'er the weltering currents,
The seething surges, safe to the Anglian
Cliffs oversea. He saw westwardly
The land that he longed for lying in beauty,
And waiting to welcome the winsome, blessed
Message of mercy that the mighty Creator
Had sent through his mouth to the men of the Angles
Far to the northward. The foam-throated vessel,
Lustrous and lovely, lay then at anchor
Sheen by the shore ; her shimmering canvas
Was big with the breezes that blew from the heavens,
Blithely to bear the blessed, faithful
Sailors of Jesus o'er the sea-deeps westward
To the isle of the Anglians. The excellent bark,
Foamy-necked floater, was fain of the journey
West o'er the waters. The one and forty
Henchmen of heaven happily clomb then
The curved-neckèd craft, cared not to tarry,
But prayed for the wind to waft them speedily
O'er the fields of the flood to the far-away, sea-washed
Land of the Angles, where the low and the high,
The churl and the king, clad in their darkness,
Saw not the Father who had formed them, beheld not
The Son who had saved them. Soon was the bark
Off on the ocean : eagerly hied she
To bear the battle-brave bairns and heroes
Afar to the combat. She fared joyously ;

Gladly, gleefully glided the waters,
Skimming the sea-deeps. The sweet-mooded vessel
Sped with the wind westward to carry
The joy-bringing news how Jesus the Saviour
Had come in the east, that all of the blood-thirsty,
Cruel and ruthless, wrangling, jangling
Men of all lands might in loving Him
Love one another. Lightly fledted she,
Goodspeed was given her. God-Father bade, then,
His breezes blow and bear to the Anglians
Such heart-cheering news as ne'er under heaven
Those heroes had heard since their heathenish eyes did
First see the sun swim in the ether,
First looked on the luminous, lustrous, resplendent
Orb in his beauty, beaming, gleaming
Torch of the firmament. The truth is established
That great, all-glorious God almighty
Ruleth the races and reigneth forever
High in the heavens, beholdeth the nations
As a drop in the bucket, as the dust of the balance,
Lord everlasting. — Lightly glided, then,
The keel o'er the currents, her canvas outspreading
With bellying breezes. The billows were gentle,
Ocean not angry, not ever would harm
The Lord's dear vessel as, leaping to westward,
She bare on her bosom the blessed, holy,
Gracious Augustine, God's dear liegeman,
And his forty good thanes, far-sailing, valiant
Heroes of heaven. Holy Augustine,
Musing, pondering, marked in his vision

The cragged cliffs, declivitous nesses,
That shone and shimmered sheen in the distance,
Far to the westward : no fuller on earth
Could add to the whiteness of those high-towering, lofty,
Heaven-kissing headlands. O'er the holm-currents glided
The bird of the ocean, bare westwardly
The forty and one well-equipped, dauntless,
Eager, excellent earlmen of Heaven,
Liegemen belovèd. They landed eftsoones
On Thanet's dear isle, where erstwhile the brothers,
Hengist and Horsa, and heroes a-many,
Folk-leaders famed, had founded a nation
Of strength so sturdy as to stand forever
A bulwark of freedom. The forty-one heroes,
Conquering combatants, came to the shore,
Their sea-wood dismounted. Men of the island,
Gaping, gazing, greedily wondered,
Musing, marvelling what meaning to see in
Their errand to Anglia : an earl of the water,
The guard of the sea-coast, greeted the strangers,
With questions accosting : " Comers-from-farlands,
Earls of the ocean, open your word-hoard,
Tell me in earnest what errand hath brought you
O'er the flood-deeps foaming. Folk-troopers like you
Ne'er have I seen. No swords rune-covered,
Well-fashioned war-mail, wire-braided helmets,
No arms nor armor *on* you or *with* you
Have *I* yet seen. Say now your errand,
Ye bald-headed¹ battle-thanes." The blessèd Augustine

¹ He did not understand the tonsure.

Spake with decorum : " Courteous liegeman,
Earlman of Ethelbert, I urge thee, hasten,
Speed then, tarry not, tell good Ethelbert,
King of the Kentmen, I come with a message
Promising peace and purest, serenest
Bliss everlasting to obedient souls,
A kingdom eternal with the true and living
God in his glory." The gracious, gentle
Message so kindly, quickly was borne, then,
To Ethelbert king of Angles and Kentmen,
Who musing, pondering, marvelled what answer
Such message demanded. His men then bade he
To care for the pilgrims, keep them in honor
Off on the island. Early anon
He came forth to meet them ; he minded to greet them
'Neath the roof of the heavens ; his heart misgave him
Lest the men of the mainland with magic might harm
him,
With sorcery charm him ; his soul not yet was
Freed from its fetters ; fiends and monsters,
Demons of darkness, deadly, loathsome,
Held in their hand-grip the high-mooded, noble
Ethelbert's spirit. He afterward knew
The life-giving Lord, the Light that was given
To lighten the heathen. — The lord of the Kentmen
Sat on the sward, safer he deemed it
From charm and enchantment. He charged his good
thanes,
Belovèd liegemen, to let not, hinder not,
But gladly, the rather, to guide the good men where

Soon they might see him. Swiftly, liegemen
Did as he bade them ; dearly, thane-like,
Loved they their lord ; leaped they, flew they,
Obeying his bidding. The brave ones would learn,
Were eager to know, on what errand, service,
Mission, message, the men of the southland
Had come to the Anglians : excellent heroes
Asked then and urged the earlmen of Gregory
To come and declare to their king, liegelord,
What hither had brought them and why they had sought
them.

Forthwith then the heroes of heaven were ready,
Burned for the battle ; boldly, fearlessly
Leaped into line, longing, thirsting
To fight with the fiends that fiercely, cruelly
Held in their chains the children of Hengist *
And all of the Anglians.~ Armor of iron
None they needed then ; nothing of sword-kind
Ringing, swinging, swung from their girdles ;
Spears they despised. Their spirits a-mighty
Leaned on the Lord, who had led them thitherward
To fight not with foes fleshly and earthly,
But with powers of the air and princes of evil
That wince not at weapons. There waved not, fluttered
not

Banner embossed, emblazoned with glory
Of earlmen of earth ; but the image of Jesu
High over head was held for a standard,
That the forty and one war-heroes dauntless,
Might look on their Lord, the lowly yet mighty

God-man triumphant ; the grave could not keep him,
Hell could not hold him. The heroes of Jesus,
Most eager of earlmen, onward, forward
Bare then their banner not blazoned with glory
Of barons of earth, not broidered nor carven
With far-renowned folk-lord's famous achievements
And deeds of great daring ; but the dear-lovèd symbol,
Emblem of love, was lifted above ;
Christ on his cross kindly, patiently,
Gently, lovingly looked down upon them,
Meekly submitting to mocking, taunting,
As thirsting, fainting, he was thrust through and ham-
mered

Down to his death. He died as a sinner,
The sinless, holy, suffering victim,
The just for the unjust, ever-belovèd
Atheling of heaven. — Onward, forward,
Measuredly marching, the men of the southland
To the king came then ; the conquering heroes
Stoutly, staunchly, sturdily hastened
To grapple the diremooded demons from hell,
Spirits of evil, that ever possess the
Lands of the heathen, loathsome and grisly,
Horrible devils. — Their hymns-for-the-battle,
Songs and paeans, were sweet-toned litanies,
Penitent prayers for pardon and mercy
For themselves and all the Anglian myriads
Sunk in their sins. Soon came they, then,
Two-score and one trusty, faithful
Priests of the Lord-God, praying, chanting

Hymns unto Heaven : happily saw they
Excellent Ethelbert, earl of the Kentmen,
Waiting to greet them. The gracious, belovèd
Confessors and fathers, fain-mooded, tarried not,
Delayed not nor lingered, their lip-treasure opened,
Said to the king : “ We are servants and liegemen
Of God Almighty, who made out of nothing
Heaven and earth and all that is in them.
He willed, and the worlds woke into being,
Sprang into space, resplendent and mighty
Lord everlasting. Last of his marvellous
Mighty creations was man, O king,
Made in his image. He early dishonored
That form and fashion, foully did anger
The God who had given him glory and honor
O’er all His creation. On through the ages,
Though man did despise Him, the mercy and pity
And goodness of God, growing, expanding,
Waxed so mighty, widening, deepening,
That He sent His son to save and redeem the
Children of Adam from endless, hopeless
Death and destruction. Dear king Ethelbert,
Hear thou and hearken Heaven’s sweet message
Of pardon and peace. Pray to the Father,
God all-gracious, to grant thee His favor,
Give thee His grace, with glory, honor,
Abundance of bliss to bless thee in heaven
When death shall subdue thee. The day is approaching,
When the God-man mighty, though grievously scouted,
Rejected of men, jeered at and taunted,

Spurned and despised, spit upon, hated,
Nailed to His cross, shall come for to judge the
Quick and the dead, dealing His justice
Unerring to all men. Ethelbert dear,
Kings too shall cringe and crawl at His footstool,
If angry His visage. He only is mighty,
We are but weaklings." The ward of the kingdom,
Ethelbert atheling, answer did render :
" Gracious Augustine, good and kind are
Your word-offers winsome ; yet wot I but little
What answer to make to message so wondrously
New and unheard of. I needs must ponder it
Well with my wise ones. Wait patiently
Here on this island. No hindrance from me
Shall let or delay you." The lord of the Kentmen,
Offspring of Hengist, early did call them
West over Wantsum to his well-lovèd, far-famous
Borough and city which the bones of Augustine
Have hallowed for ages, excellent shepherd,
Peace-bringing, pardoning pilgrim of mercy,
Hateful to hell-folk. Happy, rejoicing,
Grateful to God, the good ones proceeded,
Marching, tramping, measuredly treading,
Entered the borough where early, unhindered,
They preached the precious, peace-bringing message
Of mercy and pardon. Once more 'neath the sky, then,
Was lifted aloft the Lord's dear image ;
The meek, un murmuring, merciful Saviour,
Deathless Redeemer, down on His liegemen
Bent looks that were loving. They lifted their voices

Sweetly, softly, singing in measures
Plaintive and pleading with penitence breathing
(Heard up in heaven): "Hear us, we pray Thee,
Lord everlasting. Let now Thine anger
Be turned away far from this fond-lovèd city
And Thy house all-holy. Hear us in mercy,
For we all have angered Thee. Alleluia, Amen." —
Onward, forward fared, then, the holy ones,
Heralds of heaven, hopeful and joyous,
Brave-mooded, bright-hearted bearing before them
Christ on His cross calmly, triumphantly,
Meekly but mightily making His entry
As king of the Kentmen, come to His throne
As lord of all Albion. — Ethelbert soon
Eagerly, ardently opened his heart to
The message of love that the men of the southland
Gave him from God. Gladly, meekly,
Sweetly received he the saving, laving,
Soul-washing waters. The word of the Lord
Waxed mighty in Kentland. Many then came
Blithe to the blessed baths of salvation,
The washing of pardon. The waters of Swale
Clapped their glad hands when hundreds and thousands
Of penitent pagans were purged of their sins
And cleansed in those currents. 'T was comely, fitting
And seemly, forsooth, the souls of those throngs should
Be redeemed from death in that dear-lovèd season,
The Yule-tide hour, when all of the far-sundered
Children of God give glory and honor
And praise and power and princely dominion

To the Babe that was born in Bethlehem Judah,
Most blessèd of bairns : the birth of those souls was
Hailed up in heaven as highly beseeming
The day that is honored of earth-folk and races
For that world-saving, hell-shaking, wonderful, holy
Birth in the manger. — Bold-mooded forward,
To the south and the north, never retreating,
Eastward, westward, the armies of Jesus,
Tramping, marching, trod to the battle
With the demons and devils that dwelt in that heathenish
Isle of the ocean. Early did Gregory,
Sweet-mooded, soul-loving servant of Heaven,
Humbly but ardently offer his praises
That the speech which of yore was used in the heathenish,
Paganish rites was pouring forth now
Loud hallelujahs and long-resounding
Hosannas abounding. — The blessèd, holy,
Gracious Augustine, God's dear messenger,
Precious apostle, passed to the care of
The Father Almighty, fared on his journey,
Fearless, unflinching, faithful and dauntless,
Gave up the ghost. God-Father called him
Hence to the heavens. Hands that were loving,
Mournful and tender, took up the good one's
Dwelling of clay, dear-lovèd bone-house,
Bare it to burial : the best of him mounted
Up through the ether to All-Father's blessèd
Home of the soul, where saints of all ages
Do rest from their labors. Belovèd companions
Gave to the grave, Augustine's dear ashes,

His life-house belovèd ; laid him to rest, then,
Where fond-loving fathers, confessors and martyrs
And penitent pilgrims might press to his shrine
And utter their prayers and praises to Him who
Gave grace to Augustine, and guided him hither
On mission of mercy. His memory ever
Be honored of England, and ocean and river
And flood and field, folk-kindreds, races,
And all of the Anglians give unending praise,
Majesty, might, dominion and power
And glory to God, who gave them salvation.

VII.

ALFRED.

Lo ! in song, legend, saga and story,
We ever have heard of Alfred, dear-lovèd
Father of England, offspring of Woden,
Honored, eminent atheling, folk-prince,
Hoard-ward of heroes. Harpers, gleemen,
Minstrels of eld, mindful of rhythms,
Weavers of words, have well heralded
The daring and dauntless deeds of that noble,
Well-lovèd, war-famed, wide-ruling liegelord
Of England of old. Ethelwulf passed,
Folk-lord of Wessex, forth on his journey,
Laid down his life-joys ; not long tarried
After Judith, the elf-bright, gem-bedecked lady,
Fairest of folk-queens, fared on her way to
The Father of Spirits. Four good athelings
Were born of his body, broadly-famed princes,
The kingdom's dear shepherds. Most kingly of these
Was the great earl Alfred ; 'mid all of the races
Far was he famed. When few were his winters
God-Father marked him for glory, honor,
And life everlasting ; for Leo, the holy
Servant of Heaven, received him and owned him as
Godson belovèd ; the good one promised,

That Alfred, the infant, should ever continue
The faithful soldier and servant of Jesus
While his life-days lasted. Then Leo, eminent
Keeper of Kings, crowned him, hallowed him,
Blessed him abundantly, bade them to take him
Back to his kingdom : no curse could then reach him,
Hell could not hurt him, for Heaven had touched him
With hands hallowing. — A hero in battle was
Alfred in youth-days. Eastward, westward,
From ocean to ocean, ever intrepidly
He followed his brave-hearted brothers and liegelords,
In the fight foremost, was fain of the battle,
Exulted in carnage, would crush and destroy the
Fell-mooded, frantic, fierce-hearted Danemen
That warred upon Wessex. Wide-famed, terrible,
Well-nigh invincible was a viking and sea-dog
Rollo entitled : he rode on his sea-boats
Westward and southward, seeking to reach the
Fair and far-renowned, foam-beaten, sea-washed
Shores of the English. Up in their rivers, then,
Flew the Norse Raven ; Rollo was mighty,
Broad his renown ; there was none thwarted him
'Mid all the brave earth-folk, till England's hero-chiefs,
Alfred and Ethelred, excellent warriors,
Dared to defy him, drove him to seaward,
Off to the eastward ; not eager was Rollo
To lie in a grave in this land of the brave,
This fond-lovèd fatherland favored of Heaven,
Fairest of folk-lands ; he found it but bootless
To grapple with God, who had given great Alfred

The might and the mind to make of those restless
Races contentious a true and a mighty
People and nation. The Northman Rollo,
War-king and viking, was warned in a vision,
Liegelord belovèd, that the land of the Anglians
Was not to be his, but that Heaven had willed it
To others forever, and early he hied then
O'er the seas southward to seek 'mid the Fränkmen
For land and for country. — The kingdom of Wessex
Fell then in time to the trusty young hero,
Battle-famed Alfred, brother of Ethelred,
Offspring of Ethelwulf; honored of all men
Wisely he wielded Wessex dominions
A thirty of winters. He thirsted, panted for
Worship and honor, but ever, the rather,
Sought for, fought for, unceasingly thought for,
The weal of the well-lovèd warmen and heroes
And earlmen of England: forever and ever
His name shall be honored. — Ethelred passed, then,
Forth on his way, ward of the kingdom,
God-light elected: gracious, high-hearted
Alfred the atheling was early thereafter
Lord of all England. Not e'er heard I
Of man-ruler mightier in middle-earth's regions,
Of prince so puissant, peerless, invincible
On all the broad earth that ocean washeth
With weltering waves. Wise was Alfred
E'en in his youth-days: ever he yearned for
Goodness and wisdom; of wealth and of honor
Recked he but little. — Rollo departed

Forth into Frank-land : the fearless, terrific,
Dire-mooded Danemen dared not grapple with
Alfred and Ethelred, honored, beloved
Athelings of England ; but there after came the
Horrid and horrible hordes of the terrible,
Libidinous, lecherous, barbarous, treacherous
Robbers and pirates, plundering, ravaging
This isle of the ocean, England, the dearest
And fairest of fatherlands. Fights there were many,
Most bitter of battles ; bravely did Wessex's
Princes and people play with the edges,
Facing the fearless, frantic, implacable
Dogs of the northland, the never-relenting
Wolves of the waters. — War-famed Alfred,
Battle-grim earl, was e'er in the forefront
Facing the foeman ; few were his winters, but
Mighty his valor. Much hath been told me
Of Aescesdune, where Danemen in multitudes
Bowed in the battle, biting the dust when the
Heroes of Wessex, henchmen and vassals of
Alfred and Ethelred with onset of battle did
Fall on the foeman. Far-famous Ethelred,
Leaving the altar, then, leaped to the battle,
Rushed to the slaughter-field ; slew with his hand-blows,
Smote with his sword-stroke, a savage and terrible,
Cruel and murderous king of the Northmen,
Felled him to earthward ; and fond-loved Alfred,
Earlmen and atheling, out into battle went
Trusting in God, who giveth the victory
As best to Him seemeth. Bravely Alfred,

Brother of Ethelred, out to the battle went,
Facing the fierce, fire-eating, devilish
Sons of the northland ; he swung mightily
His battle-famed brand ; he bit right fiercely,
Heirloom of ages ; the excellent sword-blade
Failed not in battle. Five good earls, then,
Put to sleep with the sword, sank to the earth,
Sidroc the elder and Sidroc the younger,
Osbern and Fraena and fair-haired Harold,
Eagle-eyed athelings : 't was Alfred's good falchion
That stretched these stout-hearted, sturdy, relentless
Earls of the ocean out under heaven,
In the dust dead there. The deeds of the hero,
Eminent atheling, brought awe to the hearts of
The dogs of the northland : there was none braved him,
All of them feared him. Off then the heathen
Hurried and scurried ; scampered and sped they,
Sheep-like fled they. Famed was Alfred,
Offspring of Ethelwulf : eastward, westward,
To the north and the south, singers and minstrels
Published his praises ; proudly, gleemen, then,
New word-groups wove, wishing but vainly
To rehearse but the half of the hero-atheling's
Wonderful deeds, his war-skill, prowess,
His craft and cunning in quelling the drunken,
Gluttonous, murderous men of the northland,
Robbers and reavers. In rhythmical measures,
In hamlet and hall, the hero was lauded.
Song-wrights sang, then, that, southward or northward,
'Twixt arms of the ocean, 'mid all of the races,

No one of earlmen, older or younger,
Was so brave-hearted, bold-mooded, battle-distinguished,
Exalted in honor, as Alfred, youthful
War-lord of Wessex. The wise young folk-leader,
Bairn of Ethelwulf, bade then a white-horse,
As emblem of honor in England forever,
Be carved on a cliff close to the battle-field,
On a high hill-side, that heroes thereafter
Might see it and say 't was a sign and token
How Alfred atheling at Ashdown drove the
White horse of Wessex o'er the horrible, murderous,
Lustful and lecherous, lying and treacherous
Devils of Daneland, the damned, implacable
Foemen of Heaven. But the fierce, terrible
Pirates and plunderers, the proud, defiant
Fiends of the mainland, minded but little
To leave the dear land they long had been harassing,
Hacking and sacking ; they soon came back again ;
As the sands on the seashore seemed they in numbers,
Burning and ravaging, robbing and pillaging,
They wasted the well-lovèd winsome, beautiful,
Ocean-encircled isle of the Anglians
With sword and with fire, swooping down on it
Hawk-like, bitterly : Heaven permitted it,
God had forgot us. Grief, agony,
Saddest of sorrows, seized hard on the
Earlmen of England ; they all feared then,
Their beloved land lost was forever,
Fond-lovèd fatherland. Few of them hoped
(Though well they did wish it), wan-mooded heroes,

That their land would be saved from the loathsome,
venomous

Foemen and fiends, the fell-mooded, hateful,
Drunken and murderous men of the ocean,
Hot-mooded hell-hounds. None hoped, trusted
Save Alfred the king : he ever relied on
The word of the Lord, who leadeth His people
With a mighty hand and helpeth His chosen
With outstretched arm. He only could save us
When hell was an-hungered. — Heart-wretched, weary,
The belovèd Alfred looked for a place where,
Fleeing the fury of the fierce, implacable
Pirates and robbers, he might ponder his country's
Sadness and sorrow, and safely plan for her
Welfare and weal. Where the waters of Parret
And Thone commingle, a marish-encompassed
Island he wist of, off in the waters,
Westward in Wessex ; well-lovèd Alfred,
Kindest of kings, called it Athelney,
Isle of the athelings : — let England love that
Meadowy marshland and moorland forever,
The island of Athelney, where of old great Alfred,
The best of her sons, sighed for his liegemen,
Where the holy hermit, homeless and wretched,
Lovingly looked to the Lord-God and prayed Him
Quickly to come to his country and people
With help from on high. — While here patiently
Possessing his soul, sweetly awaiting
What the Lord should allot him, he looked, and behold !
Stood there before him a foot-weary pilgrim

Begging for bread. Blithely Alfred,
Heaven's dear almoner, urged that the little
Wine that was left him and the one small loaf
Of bread should be brought him : then both gladly
He shared with the pilgrim. He passed on his journey,
Thanking the king. The thanemen, returning,
Looked on the loaf, and lo ! it was whole, and
The flask as full as when first he had brought it,
Though deep he had drunken. The dear one of Heaven
Mused and marvelled what meaning to see in
All that had happened, and how the poor stranger,
Having no keel had come to that island
Off in the waters. And early anon, then,
The fishers of Alfred fared them to homeward,
Blithehearted boasting that their boats were laden
As ne'er he had known them. Anew did Alfred
Muse on the marvel, the mighty-famed lord
Did exceedingly wonder. — Wakeful and restless,
Alfred in trouble tossed on his pillow,
(His sleep forsook him), when he saw all around him
A luminous light likest the sun's when he
Streameth at noonday, and standing before him
A raven-haired man mitred and vested,
Who held in his hand the holy, beloved
Book of the Gospels, with gold and with jewels
Brightly embellished. He blessed, then, the king,
The old one the younger ; earnestly spake he
To the excellent atheling : “ Alfred, my son,
Take heart and rejoice, for, behold ! the poor pilgrim
Thou feddest to-day before thee is standing,

Cuthbert, the soldier and servant of Jesus,
The Lord everlasting. Be light-hearted, strong,
And exceeding courageous, ruler of Wessex ;
For I henceforth am thy friend and buckler,
Thy watchman and ward, and well I shall help thee,
Thee and thy sons. Soon thou shalt vanquish
The foes of thy kingdom : the Father in heaven,
The God of Glory, hath given this spacious
Island of Albion to Alfred, his servant,
To have and to hold, and, when hence thou goest,
To thy offspring after thee. Excellent man,
Rule in righteousness : then riches and power
And honor and glory shall ever attend thee
And the Father defend thee." The fond-lovèd king,
Earl of the Anglians, was eager in spirit,
Relied on the Lord, would look for the foeman,
The harrying heathen ; his heart then trusted
In God and Saint Cuthbert. He came to the mainland
And blew on his bugle, that his brave-mooded heroes
Might know he had landed to lead them battleward
Forth 'gainst the foeman. Few of them lingered, then,
Brave-hearted battle-thanes ; blithely they hastened
To look for the lord whom long they had waited for
Lovingly, trustfully. They leaped into battle,
God was their helper : the heathen were slaughtered,
The forces of Daneland fled them and sped them
From the teeth of the boar who bit them and slit them
And sliced them in slivers. Southward, northward,
Eastward and westward, through Angle dominions,
And far o'er the flood-deeps, 'mid folks, kindreds

And nations unnumbered, 't was known, bruited
That folk-ruling Father was fighting for England
And had sent His saint to say that this spacious
Island of Albion should ever be Alfred's
And his offspring's after him. The excellent prince,
Warrior of Wessex, wise over all men,
Waxed not arrogant ; ever he minded
That 't was God had given him glory and honor
And fame 'mid the races, and that Father Almighty
Exalteth one and humbleth another
As seemeth Him proper ; and he pondered in spirit
How the old and clever king of the Danemen,
Gracious and grateful, good-mooded folk-lord,
Did warn the well-lovèd, wide-famed, distinguished,
Battle-brave Beowulf, bravest of earlmen :
“ Beware of arrogance, world-famous champion !
But a little-while lasts thy life-vigor's fulness ;
'T will after hap early that illness or sword-edge
Shall part thee from strength, or the grasp of the fire,
Or the wave of the current, or the clutch of the edges,
Or the flight of the war-spear, or age with its horrors,
Or thy eyes' bright flashing shall fade into darkness ;
'T will happen full early, excellent hero,
That death shall subdue thee.” So dear-lovèd Alfred
Gavè unto God the glory for all his
Deeds of daring ; dauntless, vauntless,
Ruled he in righteousness ; he recked not of sorrow,
His help was in heaven. The hero-in-battle
Exceeded all other earth-kings and rulers
In largeness of heart, belovèd folk-chieftain,

Father of England ; he far excelled them
In wisdom and goodness ; worked out a kingdom
To stand through the ages ; established the throne
Of England forever. Early he reached his
Measure of days : death then took him
Off from his earth-scenes, up to the keeping
Of the Lord everlasting. — In legend and story
Oft have I heard how Alfred the atheling,
Refuge of heroes, hied to the camp of
Guthrum the Dane in guise of a minstrel
With harp in hand ; ne'er heard I that folk-king
Did deed so audacious, daring, adventuresome
'Neath dome of the heavens, as the doughty, invincible
Atheling of England. To Athelney came he,
Back to his troopers, told them how indolent,
Sluggish and dull the Danemen were lolling
Secure in their camp, and how quickly forsooth
A handful of heroes could harry and scatter the
Lazy, lecherous, lying and treacherous
Devils of Daneland. The undaunted earlmen
Were eager for battle, urged him to lead them
Forth 'gainst the foeman : few of them wished to
Stay from the struggle, but stoutly like heroes,
Looked for the reaving, robbing, murderous
Foes of their fatherland ; found them, and gave them
Arrows for tribute, the ash-wood spear
And swipe of the sword-blade. The sons of the Angles
Gave them no gold, but grimmest of edges,
Bite of the battle-blade. The brand of Alfred
Failed not in fight, fiercely did bite ;

The hungriest of hand-swords hankered for flesh, then,
Foremost in battle: the blood of the foemen
Ran then in rivers. The raven was glad,
Bird of the battle, was busily eating
The flesh of the fallen. The feathery eagle,
Death-swooper dusky, down from his eyrie
Flew to the feast, too. That fallow-skinned beast, too,
The wolf of the weald, waxing exultant,
Came to the carnage; he crunched and he munched the
Bones on the battle-field. Blithe were they all, then,
Fierce-mooded feasters, filled to the full
Their craws and their maws, most cruel, gluttonous
Of birds and of beast-kind. — The braves of the northland
Were beaten in battle, bold, audacious
Men of the waters; wished they but little
To leave the dear land they long had been harrying,
Sacking and hacking; but Heaven was against them,
Fought for the far-famed, fond-lovèd, God-fearing
Atheling Alfred, England's distinguished
Friend-lord and father. The folk-prince Guthrum
(So urgent was Alfred) early did come to the
Baths of salvation, the blessèd, holy
Waters of cleansing for kings and for athelings,
For serfs and for slaves. The servant of Heaven,
Alfred the holy, was eager to greet him
As brother in Christ, became the brave viking's
Godfather faithful. Guthrum blithely, then,
The sign of the cross received on his brow,
In sign that thereafter he e'er should continue
True soldier and servant of his Saviour and liegelord

Till his life-days ended ; and, along of his christening,
Was given the name of Guthrum-Athelstan,
In token that thereafter the erst-cruel heathen
Was a noble stone in the strong, immovable
House of the Lord. — Then, lavish and bountiful,
Alfred the king honored and feasted
Guthrum his godson, gave him abundantly
Jewels and gems ; generous-mooded,
Failed not to give gift-tokens many
To Guthrum's good troopers, true-hearted liegemen,
Trusty retainers. 'T is told us in story
That Alfred, the liegelord, was lavish of jewels,
(A good king he !) withheld no gifts from
Kinsmen and thanes ; so a king should be ever,
Dispensing his spacious, splendid, abundant
Bounty to earlmen, and ever rejoicing the
Hearts of good heroes that Heaven hath given him
To love as his liegemen. — The land-ruler mighty,
England's dear king, was kindest of princes,
Gentle in spirit, generous-mooded,
Lavish of jewels ; gems in abundance
He gave his dear earlmen ; forgot not but minded
The wretched around him, recked not of earthly
Praise and requital, cared he but little
To be seen of men, seeking the rather
The smile of the Father. Freely, gladly,
He offered his alms for altars and minsters
And shrines of the saints, sure of requital
Not here but in heaven. To the Holy City
He sent of his treasure, trusty, belovèd

Child of the Church ; she had chosen him early,
Sealed him and signed him to save his dear land from
Heathen and hell-men ; she had helped him right stoutly,
Dear Bride of the Lord. — The blessed Marinus,
Vicar of Heaven, heard of the goodness
Of England's dear Alfred, and early did send him,
Precious apostle, a piece of the Rood
The dear Lord had died on ; the darling of Heaven,
Alfred the holy, handled it reverently,
Tenderly took it, touched it gently
With lips that were loving, looking upon it
With eyes that were eager ; often caressing it,
To his bosom pressing it, blessing and praising
The King of all kings, kindest of liegelords,
Who had left his celestial, delightsome, perennial
Home in the heavens, and hastened to earthward
To seek Him a cross to suffer and die on,
That the king and the clown might come and receive
their

Father's forgiveness, freely might have it
All for the asking. — Alfred rejoiced,
Was thankful of heart to the holy Marinus,
Belovèd, blessèd bishop, apostle
And Vicar of Christ ; called he around him
His excellent earlmen all that were near him,
High-mooded henchmen ; his holy, pious
Dear-lovèd mother ; the modest, faithful
Wife of his bosom, well-lovèd folk-queen,
Saintly Elswitha ; with the sweet, obedient
Bairns of his body ; the beautiful boy,

Edward the atheling, who after him wielded
The island of Albion ; Ethelswitha,
Ethelfleda and other dear maidens
Whom God had given them, and graciously showed them
The piece of the Rood that Marinus had sent him,
Priest and apostle, praising the goodness
Of God's dear servant. Said then Alfred,
Henchman of heaven, holy, beloved
Earl of the English : " Let all who behold me
Thank the dear God for the gift He hath sent me,
Richest of relics. The rood of the Saviour
Long-while was lost ; little did earthmen
Know where to find it. Folk of the races
Sought it but vainly, till the saintly, beloved
Holy Helena, Heaven's dear daughter,
With faith all fervent fared on her journey
Through all the broad earth — eastward, westward,
Sought for the wood her Saviour had hallowed
When He died to redeem her. The dauntless, courageous
one,

Dear-mooded woman, went on her pilgrimage,
Mother of Constantine, minding no perils and
Fearing no foeman, fared 'mid the world-races,
Urging the earlmen, all who would hearken her,
To help her to find the fond-lovèd, precious
And long-lost rood her Lord had been nailed to,
When He came to His own and His own rejected Him
And cut Him a cross, and crowned Him in mockery
With thistles and thorns. Thought she and trusted
That Heaven would graciously guide her in seeking

The beloved wood her Lord had been bound to,
And the nails that had bitten the blessed, loving One's
Hands and His feet, harried Him cruelly,
Unpityingly pierced Him. Prayed she unceasingly,
Handmaid of Heaven, her heart ne'er failing her,
That the Glory of Kings would grant her to find the
Cross and the nails, would nowise refuse her
A boon so blessed. Brave in her spirit,
Sinless, undaunted, she dreaded no peril but
Fared on her pilgrimage far to the eastward
'Neath suns that were seething, o'er seas that tumbled
And oceans that grumbled, o'er endless expanses of
Meadow and moorland, and mountains that icily
Glinted and glistened, o'er the gurgling currents
Of rivers that rapidly ran in their gravelly,
Pebbly channels, chafingly, ragingly
Seeking the sea. Sought she not vainly,
Most pious of pilgrims, precious, faithful
Daughter of Heaven ; the Holy One gave her
To find in the earth His own dear glory-tree,
Victory-wood. The Wielder of heaven
Had kept from decay the cross He had died on,
Saviour of sinners, safely had kept it
To gladden the eyes of earthmen unnumbered
In all of the earth-regions. I may now praise Him
For the sight that I see, sooth-fast Creator,
Lord everlasting. As I look with mine eyes
On this well-lovèd treasure the World-Father sent me,
This piece of the Rood, the poet's clear vision
Meseemeth my own, and I see in my dream-thought

The Cross of the Crucified coming before me,
 Tree of the Saviour, token of pardon,
 Saying with sorrow : ' I saw the dear hero,
 Man-ruler mighty, mount to my bosom,
 Beg my embraces. I bitterly rued it
 That fiercest of folkmen, fell-mooded, made me
 Hurt the brave hero. No harm did I mean him,
 But hankered to save him ; yet horrible foemen,
 Cruel and hateful, held me, drove me
 In the earth deep there, till the excellent hero
 Could climb to my bosom. Then basely the foemen
 Hammered him down with dreadful, venomous
 Teeth of iron, tightly did nail him
 Close to my bosom. The bites of the teeth, then,
 Pained the dear earl : in anguish of spirit
 Sorrow of mood, mightily cried he,
 And gave up the ghost. I grieved in my heart, then,
 Lamented and bemoaned it, that *my* sad bosom
 Was stained with the blood-sweat of the best and the
 dearest

Of all the brave athelings I ever had heard of
 'Mong the children of men. I mused in my soul-deeps,
 marvelled why cruel ones came to the forest
 Where long I had lived a light-hearted aspen,
 Hacked me with axes, then hewed from my body
 That accursèd cross that the kindest and gentlest
 Of heroes did hang on. Horror doth seize me,
 Trembling and terror : 'mid the trees of the forest
 I shall quake and quiver and cower forever.' "

So Alfred the good was grateful in spirit,

Thankful to Heaven and the holy Marinus
For that priceless keepsake, cut from the tree that
His dear Lord had died on. Daily, hourly
He pressed to his bosom the precious, sacred
Holiest of relics, reckoned it dearer
Than gems and jewels. — Generous-hearted,
Fond-lovèd, faithful father and ruler
Was Alfred the atheling, Ethelwulf's son,
Grandson of Egbert. All of the races
Honored the name of England's distinguished,
Far-famous folk-lord ; afar and anear
Earlmen honored him, not any begrudged him
The title of father and friend to his people,
Belovèd land-prince. — Long did Alfred
Bear in his body the burden of pain,
Sadly did suffer. Himseemed the torture
Was given of God, the good and loving
King of all kings, to keep His dear servant
Lowly and humble, lest earthly lustre
Too much should exalt him, and his mood should haughtily
Forget the dear God who had given him glory
And honor 'mid earthmen. So Alfred patiently
Bare his great burden blithely, resignedly
Many a winter, till wise-mooded God-Father,
Ruler of heaven, was ready to call him
To lay down the life that long had burdened him
Here among men and mount on his soul's-wings
To that land celestial where the Lord-God wipeth
Tears from all eyes, and where anguish and sorrow
And pain and crying cometh no more

Forever and ever. — Alfred departed,
Seeking the Father, fared on his journey
To the care of his Lord. Kind-loving thanemen
And earlmen of Wessex bewailed and lamented
The death of the dear one. Dead was Alfred,
Earlman of England ; not any could measure
The sorrow and woe that welled in the bosoms
Of all men of England when, early thereafter,
They heard that the hero hence had departed,
Laid down his life-joys and left the dear people
Whom long he had led 'gainst loathsome and horrible,
Fell-mooded foemen. The folk of the Anglians
Cried unto God grief-stricken, anguished,
Bewailing their woe. Well-lovèd thanemen,
Liegemen and kinsmen, laid his dear soul-prison,
His life-house belovèd (lorn were their spirits)
At Wintanceaster, the wide-famed, beautiful
Abbey of Alfred, where erstwhile in life-days
He often had offered alms and oblations
And prayers and praises to the Prince of the heavens,
God all-glorious. They gave his dear ashes
To his belovèd abbey, to lie in her bosom
Till the trumpet shall sound ; his soul then mounted
Upward, onward, through the arch of the heavens,
To the abodes of the blest, where abundance of rest
Remaineth for the weary, and where way-worn pilgrims
And heavy-laden ones can lay down their burdens
On one who would share them or willingly bear them.

VIII.

EDGAR THE PEACEABLE.

Lo ! all of England's athelings and liegemen
Did well wot of, warmen distinguished,
Eminent heroes, often had heard of
The glory of Edgar, Athelstan's nephew,
Bairn of Edmund, the brave-hearted, war-mooded
Heroes of Wessex. With hand-strokes a-mighty,
Fell falchion-blows, these fierce-hearted, valiant,
Bold-mooded brothers beat back the Danemen
At Brunanborough, battered the Irishmen,
Scattered the Scotmen ; they scampered like foxes
Northward, westward, waited büt little then
To hold the battle-field, hurried, scurried,
Running like reindeer. Rightly, Edgar,
Kinsman of these two, came by the valor
And might marking him 'mid men of that wonderful
Era of heroes : ever 't was told him
In hall and bower, by hero and lady,
By mother and maid, by minstrel and scop
As they fingered the glee-wood, fame-deeds reciting,
How his father and uncles and other distinguished
And eminent athelings often had crushed the
Demons and devils that dared to molest their
Fond-lovèd folk-land, fairest, dearest,

Elf-lovely Albion. Edmund was gone,
Hero of heroes, from hence, off then,
Eminent atheling, upward, heavenward,
Dread of the Danemen. Dead was Edmund ;
Liofa, the hated, loathsome and treacherous,
Sent his pure soul to seek All-Father's
Light in the heavens. The lord of the Angles
Was bit by the dagger ; death then bore him
Off from his earth-joys. Honored and trusty,
Land-folk and liegemen lovingly raised
His soul-house slitten with slashing and gashing,
Bore it for burial to the beautiful, winsome
Minster and abbey that the Arimathean
Builded in Albion, to honor the name
Of his dear-loved Redeemer. Dunstan, the holy,
God's dear servant, grievèd, bereavèd,
Laid there his liegelord's life-house belovèd
Away in the grave, gave his dear ashes
To the dust they had come from, while dirges and anthems
Sped his sweet spirit to the spacious, ineffable
Raptures of heaven. — There ruled afterward
Edred and Edwy and Edgar the Peaceable
As athelings of Anglia, all high-hearted
Offspring of Alfred, Edgar farthest-famed,
Known to all nations. There was none marvelled then,
That Edgar was honored of all the great races.
And kindreds of earth, and was called the delight
And honor of England ; for an angel's voice
Was heard from the heavens, harp-like saying,
At the birth of the bairn : “ Blessèd be England,

Peace to her people, while the precious infant
Shall sit on her throne, and the saintly Dunstan
Liveth his life-days ! ” Not long Edgar, then,
Loitered and lolled, letting the Northmen
Ravage his England ; but eagerly bade he
His brave-hearted heroes to build him a mighty and
Fast-sailing fleet to float him to westward,
To look for the lying, lecherous, murderous,
Pestiferous pirates. He passed o’er the waters,
O’er the flint-gray floods, far to the westward
Lashing, slashing the lewd and horrible
Danemen of Erin, and eastward in triumph, then,
Rode on his sea-steeds ; the race of the Welshmen,
Fell-mooded foemen, he fiercely, bitterly,
Savagely slaughtered ; sword-weary left them,
Moaning for mercy ; no more harried they
Edgar’s dear Albion, his own belovèd
Kingdom and fatherland. The faint-hearted Welshmen
Gladly did pledge them to give him for tribute
Hundreds of wolves’-heads ; well did they keep this
Bravest of pledges : their promise they yearly
Performed to the full. So the fell-mooded, cruel
Heath-tramper grisly, gray-coated howler,
Venomous battle-beast, vanished from Albion,
No more murdereth men of this island,
Nor feeds on the fallen : our fathers have told us
How he scented the slaughter-field, snuffing the gory
Breezes that blew from the battle-plain reddened
With the blood of the brave, and buried his teeth in
The flesh of the fey. Famed is Edgar,

Who quelled, killed out the cruel, carnivorous
Wolf of the weald, the weird, horrible
Beast of the battle-field. — Brave and heroic,
Edgar did early humble and conquer
The foes of his folk-land ; fled then the hated
Robbers and reavers who had wracked, tortured
England for ages. Earned the great hero
The title of Peaceable : plenty, joyance,
Glory and honor made England, our mother,
Famous afar as the fairest, happiest,
Most lovesome land the Lord ever granted to
Men under heaven. — While hot in his spirit
Tow'rd the foe of his folk-land, far-famous Edgar,
Joy of the Angles, was gentle of mood
With his loyal liegemen, his belovèd, faithful
Trusty retainers, and true to the pious
Servants of heaven, the holy, godly
Monks and abbots, and all the well-learnèd
Sons of the church who sought, begged his
Counsel and aid : he honored, exalted
The priests of the Lord who laid on his altar
Their prayers and praises, and who, poor, soothly,
As men count wealth, were well assurèd
Of treasure in heaven, where treacherous moth
And rust corrupteth not, and reaving and thieving
Are wholly unheard of. — The hero forgot not
To offer Albion's alms and oblations
To the Prince of Apostles, St. Peter's honored
Vice-gerent belovèd ; laid it loyally,
Freely and fondly at the feet of the holy

Vicar of Heaven, hoping, trusting
That his own dear England ever would share
Her wealth, world-riches with the well-lovèd Father
And shepherd of souls, who seeketh not mammon,
Lusts not for lucre, but lavisheth plenty
And abundance of blessing with bountiful hands
On the poor of all lands. — Princely Edgar,
Hoard-ward of heroes, high-hearted liegeland,
Was loving and lovesome. The Lady Elfleda
Was the first of the fair, fond-lovèd maidens
Whom he well did love as his wife, heart-friend,
Folk-queen of earlmen : all men loved her,
Bowed to her beauty, boasting, wagering
That Ened the Fair was the elf-brightest, beautifullest
Queen under heaven, called her the white,
Sighed for her, would have died for her. The sweet,
precious one
Bore him a bairn, e'er her beautiful soul
God-light elected : lone-mooded, Edgar
Lamented in mourning measure and rhythm
The loss of the belovèd Lady of England,
The gracious, graceful, golden-haired maiden
Who had blushed on his bosom, and beamed at his side
As his beautiful bride ; the bairn he cherished
As pledge of the pure, precious embraces
Of his elf-lovely Ened. — The excellent king, then,
Edgar the Peaceable, proudly, serenely,
His sceptre did sway ; off the seas swept he
The fleets of the foeman ; on the field felled he
The thousands that thronged thick for the reaper,

Fondly dreaming that the dear-lovèd, beautiful
Island of Albion could ever be conquered
While Edgar the war-famed wielded her sceptre,
And Dunstan, the holy henchman of Jesus,
Was living his life-days ; for the Lord God had,
Wielder of Glory, given His word-oath
Through the angel's mouth, All-Father holy,
Had sworn solemnly that the son of great Edmund,
And Dunstan the saint, in safety should govern
The isle of the Anglians : He ever is faithful,
Covenant-keeping king of the heavens,
Lord everlasting. — The land of the Angles
Shone resplendent with the sheen, luminous
Lustre and light of the lives of numberless
Saints of the Lord who lived in that marvellous
Era of Anglia. Earth had never
Holier and heavenlier heroes of Jesus
Than Oswald and Athelwold, excellent, faithful
Shepherds of souls, and the saintly Dunstan,
Who sat in the sacred seat of the holy,
Gracious Augustine, God's belovèd
Apostle to Albion. These priests of the Lord
And others in Anglia instantly served him
With praises and prayers, preached his dear gospel
With their lips and their lives, letting their light
Shine before men, that many from darkness
Looked for the lovely, luminous, bright-beaming,
Life-giving light which the Lord Almighty
Beams from above with boundless abundance
On all men that ask Him. So Edgar, the king,

Guided, governed grandly, proudly
The athelings and earlmen of Albion, blessed
Isle of the ocean ; he ever was zealous
To rule in righteousness, rightly marking
How his fathers before him, folk-lords of Albion,
Well-lovèd war-kings, wisely had governed
The proudest of peoples. — The prince of the Anglians,
Land-chief belovèd, longed greatly, then,
Yearning no little for his Lady to solace him,
To sit at his side smiling, beguiling
Days that were dreary, drawling, weary ;
The heart of the hero was heavy, lone
As the hours dragged on. Oft he remembered
Elfreda, the fond-lovèd folk-queen of Anglia,
Wished she were with him ; but wise-ruling Father,
King of all kings, had called her to lay down
All of her earth-joys and upward, onward
To soar on her soul's-wings, to seek her celestial
Home in the heavens. The holy, belovèd
Lady Elfreda had left her earthly
Lord and his love, and lay on her heavenly
Bridegroom's bosom, blushing in glory,
Urging him again to go over the story
Of his life down below, how he so loved the world
That he gladly flung down his glittering crown
At the feet of his Father, to find him a cross
That would do to die on, to redeem the wretched
Millions and myriads of men of all races
Rushing to ruin. — 'Mid the raptures of heaven,
The fair Elfreda failed not to breathe her

Pitiful prayers for the poor, comfortless
Love she had left in the land of the Anglians,
When she came at the call of the kind-ruling Father
To her home in the heavens : happy, blissful,
With abundance of pardon, prayed she that Edgar
Might wash his soul in the saving, laving
Blood of the Lamb, might lay his sins too
On the Lamb that was slain. — In the land of Albion,
Southward, westward, where the waters of Exe
Wind through the woodlands, lived the winsome, lovely
Lady Elfrida, famed for her beauty,
Daughter of Ordgar, excellent, trusty
Earlman of Devonshire. Eastward, westward,
To the south and the north, was none but had heard of
Elfrida the Fair : far o'er the rivers,
In hamlet and hall, in the home of the thrall,
In the palace of princes, the peerless charms of this
Marvellous maiden were the minstrel's theme
And the lover's dream ; in lands without number
Famed was Elfrida. The folk-leader mighty,
Wielder of England, was eager in spirit
To learn for himself whether Lady Elfrida,
The dear maid of Devon, daughter of Ordgar,
Were half so fair as fame had painted her,
Were truthfully called the queenliest, winsomest
Woman in Albion. Edgar, the king, then,
Urged Athelwold, earl of the Anglians,
His fond-lovèd friend, to fare westward
To the manor of Ordgar, and early returning
To tell him in truth how true were the rumors

Of this wonderful woman, well to consider
How the fair maid of Devon would adorn and honor
The seat of the sweet, sainted Elfleda,
Handmaid of God, who had gone from his love
To her bright home above. Blithely went Athelwold
Off on his errand ; the earl, hero-thane
Gladly did go at his gracious liegelord's
Friendly behest : hastened, delayed not,
Went to the westward, weening, doubting not,
He soon should return and tell his dear friend-lord
That fame had flattered Elfrida of Devon,
O'er-praised her beauty, that the blessed, stately
Maidens of Wessex were winsomer, lovelier
Than all of the other excellent, beautiful
Ladies of Albion. Athelwold hied, then,
Off to the westward ; early thereafter,
Came to the home of the high-minded, bold-mooded,
Brave-hearted baron. There burst on his vision
The ineffable beauty of the blushing and flushing
Elfrida, the far-famed : He flung to the winds
His love for his liegelord : little he cared for
His king and his kindred ; he craved but the smile
Of the fond-loved Elfrida, the fairest of women
The sun ever shone on. Said he but little
Of the errand that brought him ; of honor he recked
not,
Thought not of thaneship ; threw away madly
All other earth joys, if only the beautiful,
Dove-eyed, beloved lady of Devon
Would let her dear lips lisp him to rapture,

Would murmur the word that was more in his thoughts
than

Kindred and country. The queenly Elfrida
Listened not loth : lightly, Athelwold
Gained from her father the glad, enrapturing
Word of consent, then went on his journey
Off to the eastward, to Edgar, his king,
With lies for his liegelord. The land of the Angles
Far to the east had erst ever been
Bright to earl Athelwold : dishonor and shame
Cloud-like had come now to cover the heavens
With darkness a-dreary : death is far better
To an excellent atheling than infamous life is. —
Edgar and Athelwold early did meet, then,
Land-prince and liegeman : laughing, jesting,
Playfully twitting the prince of the Anglians,
Said then Athelwold, earlman, liegeman,
Treacherous trickster : “ ’T is true, Sire,
That maidens of Wessex are winsomer, lovelier,
In sooth, fairer than the famed, notable
Lady of Devon. I looked on the maiden,
And lo ! her face was fair as a vision,
Comely her countenance, queenly, majestic,
But her form unlovely ; not fain, gladly
Would I see her sit in the saintly Elfleda’s
Seat at thy side ; my soul yearns for the
Gracious, graceful, glory-encircled,
Fawn-like lady whom liegemen and heroes
Delighted to look on. — I loth should behold her
Unqueenly, uncouth, as she came through the mead-hall

Bearing a beaker to benches and dais,
To liegemen and lord : a laugh of derision
Might follow the folk-queen." The friend-lord of Wessex,
Lord of all Albion, answered his thaneman :
"Thanks do I owe thee, excellent man,
Good earl Athelwold, for all thou hast spoken,
Thane-like hast uttered. I early shall render thee
The meed thou hast earned by thine eminent wisdom,
Mighty-famed valor. My vassals, dutiful,
Early shall give thee excellent jewels,
Goodliest of gold-gems, gifts in abundance,
War-horses, swords, with the sweetest of maidens
'Mid the kin of the king to comfort and cheer thee
With her blushing embraces." Blandly, artfully,
Athelwold answered : "Edgar, beloved,
Gold-friend of heroes, grant me, I pray thee,
This simple petition, myself to wed this
Maiden of Devon. Debt-weary, harassed,
The gold of the lady would lighten my burden,
Greatly would gladden me. Gracious king Edgar,
Hear my petition." The helm of the Angles,
Edgar the king, quickly, speedily
Sent him off on his happy errand to Devonshire,
Wishing, weening for his well-loved liegeman
Abundance of bliss in the blushing embraces
Of Elfrida, the far-famed. The friend-lord of England
Wist not the grief (God alone knew it)
Would erelong follow that foul, ineffable
Lie of his liegeman : the Lord God reigneth,
And all false ways he utterly abhorreth ;

The treacherous tongue he teareth in slivers,
Plucketh it to pieces ; will punish in hell-fire
Lips that are lying. — The lady of Devon,
Elfrida the fair, fondly on Athelwold
Lavished her love : little she dreamed, then,
That a queen's crown would come at her bidding,
To beam on her brow. Better had Athelwold
Never been born, when anon unto Edgar
The story was told, how the treacherous thaneman
By falsehood the foulest had filched from his liegelord
Fond-loving, trustful, the fairest of women
In all of Albion. Angry of mood, then,
Was Edgar the Peaceful, early set out to
East-Anglian land, to learn for himself there
(No friend should betray him) if Elfrida, in sooth,
Were half so fair as fame painted her,
Were called truthfully the queenliest, winsomest
Woman in Albion. Early anon,
A henchman of Edgar entered the hall of
Alderman Athelwold, off to the northward,
Gave him this greeting : " Great earl Athelwold,
Edgar, thy fond-loving friend-lord doth greet thee,
Longeth to meet thee. The lord of all England
Is hither a-faring ; would fain visit thee
Here in thy home ; would hold to his bosom
Edgar the bairn, infant belovèd,
His dear-lovèd godson ; would greet Elfrida,
The lady of Devon." Then lorn, wretched
Was Athelwold earl, anxious of spirit,
Heavy of heart : hard bested was

The tricky deceiver. Sought he Elfrida,
He told tenderly the torture and anguish
That had seized on his soul, beseeching forgiveness
For the wrong he had wrought her, wretchedly besought
her

By the love that he bore her, begged her to save him
From the fury of Edgar ; urged her beseechingly
So to conceal her soul-dazzling beauty
That the king would not crave her, nor kill him in anger
For the wrong he had wrought him. But wrathful, wroth
Was the Lady Elfrida : her love, then, turned to
Hatred the hottest. The high-born folk-lady
Was frantic and frenzied, flung away pity ;
Bitter her words were : “ Woe unto Athelwold,
Liar, deceiver ! As Lady of England
And of all of Albion, I had been honored,
Had *he* been but trusty. The traitor shall perish
Ere to-day’s sun sinketh.” Secretly she clad her
In robes that were richest, arrayed her gorgeously
In precious apparel, put on the rarest
Of jewels and gems that the generous-mooded,
Loving but treacherous lord of East-Anglia
Long had been lavishing on his Lady Elfrida,
And went forth to welcome the world-famous hero,
England’s dear Edgar. Early anon
There burst on the king that abundant, ineffable
Vision of loveliness that had lured earl Athelwold
Down to dishonor, had dazzled a liegeman
To be false to his folk-lord. The defender of heroes,
Lord of all Albion, looked on Elfrida

With rapture and wonder ; wist he how basely
His liegeman had lied : loved he the fairest
And winsomest of women ; would wed her forthwith
And slay her deceiver. Soon thereafter,
Athelwold earl and Edgar his liegelord
Hunted in Wherwell. Hot in his spirit,
Bitter and angry, Edgar the king
Smote with his lance the lying, treacherous
Earl of East-Anglia ; out in the wood there
Did him to death ; down he fell head-long,
Dead in his traces. Dear-lovèd Edgar
Wedded Elfrida, widely-famed, beautiful
Daughter of Ordgar. Ethelred king
And Edmund the atheling, early thereafter,
Were born of her body, bairns of Edgar,
Dear little princes. Daily, nightly,
Ever incessantly, Edgar the king
And the fond-loved Elfrida found on their hearts the
Burden of sin ; saw no peace till
They builded a minster by the margin of Wherwell,
A house to the Lord. Holy virgins,
Servants of Jesus, they set therein, then ;
Singing their songs, sweetest of melodies ;
Ever they raise anthems of praise,
Hymns of thanksgiving, heavenward breathing
By day and by night their never-remitting
Prayers of faith with fasting and vigil,
To God and His glory. — Great was Edgar,
Far spread his fame : few and slight were
The sins of his soul. Some of the elders,

Old men of England, often have told us
That the king was too kind to the cruel, perfidious,
Lecherous Danemen, too lenient of mood
To sea-dogs and vikings who had swooped from the
northward

And eastward of England ; but all of the holy,
Pious and godly priests of the Lord God,
Servants of Heaven, say that that atheling
Was blotless and spotless. — Though spacious his fame,
Edgar was humble ; earnest, God-fearing
Son of the church, seeking, begging
The counsel of learnèd liegemen of Jesus,
Bishops and fathers ; fain delayed his
Crowning as king, till there came to his spirit
Forgiveness and peace, pardon for all the
Sins of his youth-days. A sixteen of winters
He ruled over Albion, ere the eminent, pious
Dunstan and Oswald, athelings of Heaven,
Laid on his head hands of anointing,
Hallowing, holy ; held to his lips
The blessèd, beautiful book of the gospels
That our kings have kissed when, crowned, they appealed
for

Help unto Heaven. — The hero-liegelord
Early thereafter set out to the northward,
Sailing the seas that encircle and girdle
The island of Albion : ocean was glad,
Winsome the waters, welcomed the beautiful,
Fleeting and foamy floats of the Anglians
That bosomed the waters ; begging, craving

The honor of wafting England's dear barks
Off on their errand. Out on the waves, then,
Forth on the flood-deeps, fared the dear vessels
Far and away; westward, northward,
The birds of the billow breasted the waters,
Skimming the currents, came then early
Where dear-lovèd Dee, dashing, splashing,
Northward and westward windeth and bendeth,
Rushing to seaward. Soon, then, Edgar,
Lord of all Albion, loftily, proudly
Saw there awaiting him widely-famed earlmen
And athelings of Albion, eight of them ready
To bow to his bidding; blithe was the hero,
Lord of the Anglians; not ever had king
Liegemen-thanes so illustrious, mighty
As Edgar of England. The excellent heroes,
Nine dear athelings, early anon
Mounted a sea-boat, sailing o'er Dee's
Well-lovèd waters: wide-famous Edgar
Guided the helm; his high-mooded liegemen,
Eight great earlmen and athelings of Albion,
Bent to the oars, and brought the good sea-wood,
Bark of the atheling, early thereafter
To the shrine of St. John, where they joined their voices
In praises and prayer, passing erelong
Back on their journey. Joyous, gleeful,
Exultant was Edgar: England, belovèd
Mother of heroes, though mighty her fame is,
Not ever had seen, nor e'er had dreamed of
The sight seen there by swains of that marvellous

Era of heroes, when Edgar, her liegelord,
Had kings for oarsmen, eager, craving
To serve at his bidding. — The blessèd Edgar
Early thereafter ended his earth-joys,
The lord of all Albion chose another light,
Beauteous and winsome ; the wielder of England
Abandoned this frail, this barren life,
And sailed on his soul's-wings to his sweet, blessèd
Home in the heavens, where he hero-like serveth
With angels and archangels forever and ever.

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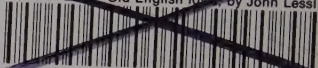
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